

THE PROBLEM CHILD AT HOME

A STUDY IN PARENT-CHILD
RELATIONSHIPS

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NEW YORK
THE COMMONWEALTH FUND
1932

PUBLISHED AUGUST, 1928
SECOND PRINTING, NOVEMBER, 1929
THIRD PRINTING, MARCH, 1932
FOURTH PRINTING, DECEMBER, 1938

PRINTED IN THE U. S. A.

PREFACE

THOSE who work with the young patients of a child guidance clinic have a rare opportunity to gather family histories and observe relationships between parents and children. As a consequence, the records of these clinics are veritable mines of information on this most vital of topics. The present volume is the result of an effort to draw from the experiences of fathers and mothers and children who came to the clinics helpful suggestions for other parents faced by similar problems.

The chapters which follow lay no claim to completeness and are not the result of a statistical analysis. The interpretation they embody is based upon study of some two hundred records drawn (with a single exception) from the clinics conducted, during a five-year period, under the Commonwealth Fund Program for the Prevention of Delinquency.¹ Most of these records were suggested for reading by members of the various clinic staffs in response to a request for cases where the child's difficulties seemed clearly to originate in the home. While there is no certainty that the records studied are fair samples of the much larger numbers of such cases to be found in the various clinics, the fact that suggestions were received from many workers of diverse training in different communities seems to assure against undue predominance of any one point of view. Furthermore, attendance upon a long series of clinic case conferences in which scores of unselected records were discussed enabled the writer to make some independent choices, and has

¹Including the Bureau of Children's Guidance of the New York School of Social Work, and the demonstration clinics conducted by the National Committee for Mental Hygiene.

convinced her that the material examined is roughly representative.

A word should perhaps be said regarding the plan of the book. Parts I and II are devoted to discussion of what have impressed the writer as the most typical and frequently recurring problems of parent-child relationships recorded. In order to secure a degree of unity and coherence in each chapter, it has been necessary to refrain from presenting any account of the treatment of these problems or of outcome of treatment. The welding together of case material into consecutive discussion is at best a difficult task; if attention is constantly diverted to the later history of each child, it becomes an impossible one. Attention is therefore centered upon family situations and—so far as discoverable—the causes lying back of them. Only in the twelve narratives which form Part III has the story been carried—in extremely abbreviated form—through the treatment period; and here again the choice of records was determined mainly by the interest and significance of the parent-child relationship involved, rather than by methods or results of treatment.

A further point should be borne in mind. In the various chapters it has been necessary, for the sake of clearness, more or less to isolate the parental factors entering into children's difficulties. Even the slightest of these clinic records is a formidable document, and use of brief notes to illustrate specific parental attitudes inevitably involves neglect of other phases of the situation. While occasionally it may appear that a parent's mistakes were wholly responsible for a child's wrong-doing or unhappiness, more often other factors in school or community interact with these mistakes to produce the problem. Moreover, back of all lies the riddle of the child's own personality. However much we may minimize heredity and magnify the influence of the forces

that have acted upon a child since birth, it remains a fact that different children from the outset react differently to similar experiences, and that we are as yet unable to run down all the reasons for these differences in reaction.

Strictly speaking, indeed, proof that in any instance a father's or mother's behavior is responsible for a child's behavior cannot be furnished, since scientific and fully controlled experiment in this field is obviously impossible. All that can be done is to bring forward examples typical of the vastly greater number that have convinced those most intimately acquainted with the facts that a causal connection exists. The reader must decide for himself whether the inferences drawn are justified.

The use of quotations in a study of this type seems to call for a word of explanation. Much of the matter quoted appears within quotation marks in the original records, and is thus the closest approximation to what was actually said which the worker's memory could produce. Sometimes, however, indirect discourse in these records has been rendered into direct discourse, with necessary condensations and changes in tenses, connectives, and so on. Wherever this has been done, the greatest care has been taken to refrain from distorting meanings, and new points have never been introduced except in a few instances where the worker, in discussing a situation with the writer, has supplied an item from memory.

Care has also been taken to disguise family situations as thoroughly as possible without altering essentials. All names are of course fictitious.

One other point: despite the writer's interest in tracing attitudes and behavior to their causes, distribution of blame is the last thing with which she has been concerned while selecting, grouping, and interpreting the case material.

Psychiatrists emphasize the extent to which each one of us, adult and child alike, has been molded by forces beyond his control; and the impossibility of any human being's maintaining a flawless adjustment to a constantly changing environment. All of us are at one point or another a bit askew, a bit warped by our own peculiar experiences. The important thing is that we should recognize the fact, and instead of seeking always to justify our own behavior by any argument we can lay hands upon, should endeavor to trace our prejudices, our points of view, back to their origins. Once understanding how we came to think, feel, and react as we do, we are better prepared to head off unfortunate reactions and substitute more suitable and socially helpful ones.

It is impossible to close this preface without reference to the debt of gratitude owed to certain advisers. Chief among these is Mr. Porter R. Lee, whose sustaining confidence and unsparing but always constructive criticism made possible the completion of the study. Thanks are also due to members of the Commonwealth Fund staff who have offered helpful criticism, and to members of the various clinic staffs who have reviewed individual narratives. Finally, I wish to express my indebtedness to four psychiatrists—to Dr. Ralph P. Truitt, Dr. George S. Stevenson, and Dr. George H. Preston for their critical reading of Parts I and II, and to Dr. Bernard Glueck, not only for his reading of several chapters, but for many insights into human relationships gained from him in class and conference.

The above acknowledgments are not designed to shift responsibility for the completed volume. It is indeed hoped that serious inaccuracy has been guarded against; but for the inadequacies certain to be found the writer alone is to be held accountable.

M. B. S.

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PART I

EMOTIONAL SATISFACTIONS WHICH PARENTS
AND CHILDREN SEEK IN ONE ANOTHER

Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of Life's
longing for itself.
They come through you but not from
you,
And though they are with you yet they
belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not
your thoughts,
For they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies but not
their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of
tomorrow, which you cannot visit, not
even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them, but seek
not to make them like you.
For life goes not backward nor tarries
with yesterday.

KAHLIL GIBRAN, *The Prophet*.

CHAPTER I

THE EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF THE CHILD

THIS small being whose physical needs have inspired specialists in many fields to endless research, whose intellectual needs are the concern of a host of educators: What of his emotional needs? How important are they? Where and by whom are they being studied? How may we learn to recognize and to meet them?

As to the importance of these needs, there would seem to be but one possible answer. Whether we look to the history of man, to the literature which is the product of men's minds, or to the life of today, it is evident that the adult world has always been ruled largely by its emotions: in all that leads to the building up and breaking down of homes, in that vast, intricate network of relationships which result in clashes and alliances between individuals and groups and nations, they are obviously at work. Yet students of psychology tell us that we are only beginning to understand the rôle of our emotions, the extent to which they masquerade in the guise of reasoned thought and deceive ourselves and others. Furthermore, those who study mental disorders from both the medical and psychological standpoints find in emotional maladjustments a chief cause of the breakdowns in youth and middle age which crowd our hospitals and sanatoria, as well as a source of endless misery in those who avoid breakdown. They find, too, that with a large proportion of individuals suffering in such ways the maladjustment began

in childhood; and that misconduct, whether in the form of juvenile delinquency or of adult crime, is no less intimately related to other childhood difficulties in the emotional field.

- Clearly, then, the emotional life of the child is important enough to justify all the attention that can be given it.

To limited groups of parents here and there these ideas are already familiar; to vastly larger numbers, even of the intelligent and generally well-informed, mental disease still suggests merely such blanket explanations as hereditary taint or overwork, while delinquency points back to equally general notions like original sin or bad environment. So far as we have come to understand the deeper and more individualized causes of behavior difficulties we owe our enlightenment mainly to psychiatrists and psychologists—adventurers and discoverers in uncharted regions of the mind, who differ, sometimes bewilderingly, among themselves, yet who in the last two decades have greatly expanded and enriched our understanding of human life. It is from them that the discussion of parent-child relationships in the chapters that follow mainly derives. As to the present chapter, its summing up of childish emotional needs is hardly more than a forerunner of that discussion—a reminder of points tacitly accepted by most of us, yet sometimes lost sight of because of their very familiarity.

What, then, are the emotional needs of the child, the satisfaction of which normally rests with the parents?

Most fundamental of all, probably, is his need of security. Utterly helpless at the outset, his embryonic personality needs the fostering of love as much as his body needs the fostering of physical care. If an alien, indifferent world presses too soon upon him, if the atmosphere he breathes is heavy with contention, if there is no sure refuge to which he

can turn, no one to whom and on whom he counts supremely and in whose presence his small individuality can be freely and unreservedly itself, the growth of his mind is inevitably cramped and warped. It is as though, physically, he lived in an environment at once so restricted and so overcrowded that he could not run or jump or climb, and was constantly hemmed in and menaced by adult activities pursued without regard to him.

Love for the child on the part of both his parents is thus a first condition of his security; but no less vital is harmony between the parents. The home broken by discord or death, whose children are torn between the claims of rival parents or separated from both and scattered among relatives or strangers, is universally recognized as a chief source of juvenile delinquency and unhappiness. No less disruptive to the child's inner life is open contention between parents who continue to live together; while differences and disharmonies which the parents think they are successfully concealing are often sensed even by children too young to be able to formulate their anxieties in words, with most upsetting results. Purely external causes of insecurity, such as irregular and inadequate income and frequent changes of abode, with all that is involved in the way of new adaptations to school and comrades, are of course also harmful to many children; though when the inner harmonies of the home are preserved, such outer conditions need not be wholly destructive.

It is, of course, impossible that the complete security of the young child, even in the most harmonious and stable of homes where justice and gentleness rule, should endure indefinitely. Nor would this be desirable; for in a state of absolute security the youngster would find small incentive

to the full exercise of all his powers which is essential to healthy growth; and that every child wants to grow up, to become strong and independent, is as true as that every child seeks security. Gradually he must learn to hold his own in a larger world of which his home is only the center.

It is this desire for growth, for freedom and opportunity to grow, which reveals the second great emotional need of the child, full satisfaction of which is to be gained only from and through his parents. To many parents this need is less obvious than the need for security; if only they can keep their little boy or girl safe, and their own, they hardly think of the young man or woman in the making. The child, if he be not granted freedom and opportunity in gradually increasing measure, may indeed eventually break away and grasp them for himself. Unfortunately, the prize thus acquired will no longer be what it might have been; the youth, however loudly he may proclaim his independence and adulthood, will be marked by immaturities which he does not himself recognize and cannot shake off. For growing up is a stage-to-stage process, and if he is held back at the earlier stages and then seeks to pass them at a single bound, he inevitably misses the practice along the way which would have fitted him little by little to make intelligent use of each new experience encountered.

Security and freedom to grow, though sometimes they may thus interfere with one another, are not, however, necessarily antagonistic. The child who is encouraged, as he emerges from infancy, to mingle with other children and to find a great part of his satisfaction in relations with them; who is given ample opportunity to handle and learn about things, to orient himself in the physical world and the world of ideas; who is taught to fight his own battles and encouraged to make his own plans: such a child will not be

likely to suffer from over-security in his home life; the sympathy, counsel, and fellowship he receives there will rather be sources of strength. It is only when such parental attentions are exaggerated and made to overshadow every other interest in his life that his growth is hampered by them.

If the child's growing up is, as has been suggested, a stage-to-stage process in which the parent may help at each stage by presenting opportunities, granting freedom, and offering incentives, it is none the less true that the process as a whole is largely governed by glimpses of the end-result sought. Most children spontaneously form their earliest conception of what they would like to be upon parental models—typically, the big strong father, the tender loving mother; and the way these ideals expand and absorb into themselves new desirable features, on the one hand, or shrink and become twisted and atrophied, on the other, is of vital importance to their future. For this reason the third great emotional need of the child is here assumed to be the need of a concrete ideal embodied in the parents.

The notion that their doings and sayings, their prejudices and predilections, are all liable to be faithfully taken over into the life of the small person to whom they have assumed the astonishing rôle of parent may well cause alarm in the bosoms of young fathers and mothers, many of them barely emerged from adolescence and the domination of their own parent-models. Yet there is no escape. No ideal they can paint for the child, in however glowing colors, no admonitions to virtue or warnings against evil, will exert anything approaching the influence of their own day-by-day living.

But—some one may challenge—what of the ne'er-do-well sons of virtuous fathers, the selfish daughters of self-sacrificing mothers?

Assuredly the presenting of a concrete ideal does not insure its being emulated. Many a "good example" is spoiled by its exaggerations, or by being too deliberately and consciously held up to the young. Also, many a parent who passes as a model citizen among his fellow-citizens may appear far less than that under the white light that beats upon him as head of a family. However, when all allowances are made it remains true that even the most flawless gentleness, patience, and unpretentious generosity in a parent may fail to reappear in children. That a father or mother who preaches honesty or loyalty or unselfishness while practising their opposites ever succeeds in inculcating these virtues in a child may, however, be doubted. Endeavoring to be what one wants one's child to be, without assuming that one already embodies this ideal, seems on the whole the procedure most likely to succeed.

Low ideals and accomplishments in a parent are of course only too likely to be accepted by children and incorporated into their own codes. When, through outside influences, this result is averted and other higher ideals are substituted, there is cause for rejoicing; yet who shall measure the conflict and suffering involved for the child in such rejection of the parent-model?

Different in nature but no less severe may be the conflict in the mind of a child whose father or mother embodies for him an exceptionally high ideal of achievement or character. On the intellectual side, even where a conspicuously able parent exerts no special pressure to make a child of a less intellectual type live up to high standards, the youngster may feel himself under a desperate inner compulsion to succeed along parental lines which drives him to attempts in which defeat and discouragement are inevitable; or, on the other hand, he may, in despair of such achievement, relapse

into sheer lassitude and aimlessness. Unless he is helped to form an ideal for himself more in keeping with his actual potentialities, he may waste his youth in hopeless striving or helpless drifting; what he needs is to discover and utilize his own abilities and set his own goals for achievement. Similarly, where the ideal embodied in a parent is one of exceptionally lofty character, the child who accepts this ideal and measures himself against it may form habits of self-condemnation from which he may never be able to free himself. The remedy need not involve a tearing down of the ideal; rather should the child be helped to realize that high ideals can be attained, even approximately, only by long-continued, persistent effort, and that accomplishment which falls short of full success does not merit self-contempt. Still more important is it to help him to form the habit of responding spontaneously in helpful concrete ways to the needs of those about him, without too much attention to the effect of what he does upon his own character. Only thus will he make his maximum contribution to human happiness—in others and in himself—while avoiding the dangers of priggishness.

If the child needs a parent fit to serve as practical working model, no less does he need one who is companionable: not another immature being like himself, nor yet one whose own childhood lies so far in the dim past as to have been forgotten, but one who remembers and understands, who listens and considers. This is the fourth great need of the child.

How common is real companionship between parents and children?—companionship, that is, in which the child talks freely of his interests and the parent enters into those interests with understanding and sympathy? No sure method of answering suggests itself—clinic records, of course, furnishing far from a fair sampling of family life. One of the most intel-

lignant of the mothers quoted in this book says she doesn't believe it is "natural or customary" for children to confide in their parents. If "customary" stood alone here, one might be inclined to agree, but "natural" raises another question. As our understanding of human nature increases, how many modes of thinking and feeling and behaving, once considered "natural" in children or in adults, prove to be the result of training unintentionally administered by their elders? The child whose outpourings are often interrupted by a pre-occupied "Yes, dear, but run along now, mother's busy," or whose questions are shunted off by an evasive "You're too young to understand now, son; when you're older father'll explain," is likely soon to lose the impulse to confide in or to seek explanations from his parents. And such rebuffs are mild indeed compared with those often administered by well-intentioned but impatient and thoughtless adults.

What other needs of the child may be met by the parent who knows how to bear him company? Perhaps these needs may be summed up under three heads: first, the need of a safety valve; second, the need of an interpreter of life; third, the need of a guide.

We are not here considering the need of the parent as playmate. For an only child, cut off by unchangeable circumstances from comrades of his own age, this need may be fundamental; and any child is fortunate whose parents are able to enter into indoor games or outdoor sports with him. But for many parents such a sharing of play life is impossible, and probably for most children other companionship in play makes it unessential. The three needs outlined above seem, on the other hand, needs which are universal and which can only rarely be satisfactorily met by others than parents.

If precedence is here given to the need of an outlet, it is partly because, from the child's point of view, this may be

his only need; partly because until it is met there is small chance that the parent will have the opportunity to function as interpreter and guide. Failure to realize this latter fact may largely account for the tons of ineffective advice delivered annually by devoted parents to children who neither listen nor heed. Unless and until these youngsters are given the opportunity to talk themselves out, to air their own views and outline their own plans and projects, they are not likely to be in a mood to consider the views and plans of adults.

There are, to be sure, the dependent ones, who seldom formulate projects of their own and habitually seek advice; and at the other extreme there are those so self-confident and unimaginative that no amount of willingness to listen and consider on the part of their elders, no degree of tact in the offering of suggestions, will open their minds to the influence of any other point of view than their own. But for the vast majority it seems certain that advice delivered by a superior being who never descends to the child's own level or takes the trouble to get at what lies behind his words and acts is generally ineffective, while the unobtrusive suggestions of one who has shown himself a comrade and friend, offered without authoritative emphasis in the course of free talk, have a far better chance of being accepted. As to the advantage to the child of having another and more mature mind to draw upon, this is of course limited by the poise, the wisdom, the actual maturity of that mind; there are certainly parents whose contribution to clearer thinking and saner planning must be counted as nil. But in general, the boy or girl whose own reactions to current happenings are supplemented by the reactions of an adult is more likely to come to sound conclusions than the one who must rely wholly on his own judgment.

Another consideration which may well influence parents to cultivate comradely relations with their children in preference to the ways of the dictator has been emphasized by more than one modern writer. We middle-aged folk have not in the main attained to any sufficiently high level of wisdom in the management of our personal lives or our common social life to justify us in repressing the groping efforts of youth to work out a philosophy and *modus vivendi* better suited to the needs of humankind. Parents who realize their own deficiencies and their inability to cope with the many ills of society will not be eager to act as models to their children, though that rôle may be thrust upon them; they will prefer a relationship more like that of an older brother or sister—a near-equality that graduates into full equality with the passage of time. The last thing that they will desire is to limit their child's growth—for if he is not to surpass them in insight and wisdom, where is the hope of the world?

Nevertheless the experience of mankind to date is something no one of us can afford to disregard; and familiarity with the ideas and conclusions of the older generation is a necessary part of youth's equipment for life in a world which, until long after he enters it, will still be controlled by that generation. If he does not gain this familiarity in friendly converse with companionable adults, he is in danger of acquiring it far more painfully after coming into head-on collision with established usages. To choose his way he must know the alternatives among which possible choice lies. The more calm, dispassionate, and just the discussion of those alternatives by his elders, the better his chances of choosing sanely, since in such an atmosphere he will not feel himself forced to take sides either for or against conventional views. Making thus an unforced choice, he will be less likely to swing from one extreme to the other, as

those who act under parental compulsion in youth so frequently do in later years.

How do the emotional needs of children touched upon in this chapter—need of security, need of a chance to grow up, need of a concrete ideal to grow toward, need of adult companionship at all stages of growth—how do these needs, or the satisfaction of these needs, dovetail with the satisfactions which parents seek in their children?

Clearly, there are possibilities of conflict. A few have been suggested in the preceding pages, others will be discussed in the chapters that follow.

There is, however, a whole group of unfortunate parent-child relationships which will scarcely be touched upon here. Though most parents seek for various forms of satisfaction in their children, some are so completely absorbed in seeking satisfactions from other sources that their children hardly exist for them save as annoying drags upon their freedom. Downright neglect and indifference, desertion and active abuse, are common enough in this world to make work for a whole army of social workers and foster parents. Children who have suffered thus extremely are frequently brought to child guidance clinics by those who are seeking to save them from the consequences of early mishandling; and no group needs, or receives, more earnest study. The neglectful or vicious parents of these children are, however, in great degree beyond the reach of the clinic's influence or the influence of a book like this. Far more numerous and far more accessible to suggestion from outside sources are parents who love their children and mean to do their best for them, but somehow miss the way. It is with the experiences of such parents as these that the discussion that follows will mainly deal.

CHAPTER II

THE SATISFACTION OF NORMAL PARENTAL LOVE

For the awful thing about your children was that they were always dying. Yes, dying. The baby Nicky was dead. The child Dorothy was dead and in her place was a strange big girl. The child Michael was dead and in his place was a strange big boy. And Frances mourned over the passing of each age. You could no more bring back that unique loveliness of two years old, of five years old, of seven, than you could bring back the dead. Even John—John was not a baby any more; he spoke another language and had other feelings; he had no particular affection for his mother's knee. Frances knew that all this dying was to give place to a more wonderful and a stronger life. But it was not the same life; and she wanted to have all their lives about her, enduring, going on, at the same time. She did not yet know that the mother of babies and the mother of boys and girls must die if the mother of men and women is to be born.

MAY SINCLAIR,
The Tree of Heaven.

IN THE preceding chapter it was assumed that all young children have substantially the same emotional needs; and these needs appeared so obvious, so certain to be recognized and accepted, that elaborate discussion or illustration of them was deemed superfluous.

No such assumption can be made regarding parents. The extent to which their childhood needs were met as they arose, their whole later emotional history as adolescents and adults, help to determine what satisfactions they shall seek in their first child; and their experiences with this and with each succeeding child progressively modify the demands they make upon later offspring. In general it may be said that these demands for emotional satisfaction are either such as

the child can meet while satisfying his own emotional needs, or that they interfere with the satisfaction of those needs, and hence with the child's normal development.

In many of the records studied there has appeared to be some such interference between parental search for satisfaction in a child and that child's own needs. The mother who, disappointed in herself or her circumstances, looks to her child to make up to her for all the hard knocks of fate; the father who, regarding himself as a success, expects his offspring to measure up to his standards; the parent who, disappointed in one child, turns to another for the satisfactions missed—these and a host of others are represented in our collection: and the ways in which their demands upon their children or their dissatisfaction with them work to the injury of these youngsters have seemed of sufficient importance and interest to justify discussion at some length. Chapters III to VI will, therefore, be devoted to the more common parental drives for satisfaction and their consequences.

Not all those who make mistakes in the management of their young are, however, driven by intense personal need to seek compensation, or consolation, or support for their pride; nor are all the children brought to a child guidance clinic suffering from dire disorders of behavior or personality. Clinic workers would probably agree that the problem child whose parents have not contributed in any way to the creation of his problem is an exception. Nevertheless, many fathers and mothers ask the help of the clinic before the difficulties which perplex them have assumed overt or threatening form; and such parents perhaps differ from the average of the community in taking their problems more seriously rather than in making more serious mistakes in child management. Among the younger children especially,

many are no less fondly loved and scarcely more unwisely handled than hosts of youngsters who have never achieved the distinction of being considered "problem children."

It is with some of these relatively normal children from substantially normal homes that the present chapter will deal: children whose emotional needs are not being fully met, yet whose difficulties seem from the records to be due to more or less inadvertent disregard of certain of those needs rather than to blocking of them by demands for exaggerated parental satisfaction. As might be expected, a large proportion of the children who present these milder problems are young—either under school age or in the lower grades. A considerable number are only children or ex-only children who, after enjoying the center of the family stage for several years, have had to cede that position to, or share it with, a newcomer. Occasionally we find a child with several brothers and sisters who is yet practically an only child because he followed the others after so wide a gap of years. Again, a child who occupies any position in the family group may have been helped to become a problem by one of those misfortunes which center sympathy and concern upon the victim, or by marked superiority or inferiority to the others. One generalization only can be made regarding most of these children: they have received, during part or all of their lives, the too-concentrated attention of their elders. Sometimes this attention has expressed itself in over-enjoyment and over-praise; sometimes in over-meticulous care, exaggerated solicitude, and anxiety; more rarely, in over-stressing of the desire for perfection, and severity.

Thus, while the youngster who has been subject to parental over-attention may occasionally be a repressed, serious, well-behaved child, he is far more likely to exhibit some combination of what may be designated as spoiled-child traits.

Whether these shall be prevailingly of the active, demanding, destructive sort, or of the passive, helpless, wheedling variety, and in what degree of intensity they shall manifest themselves, may be determined as much by the child's original make-up as by the experience which life has brought him; but since original make-up is, even in the child of two or three, so overlaid by experience as to be for the most part unascertainable, it is inevitable that an effort to search out causes should deal chiefly with his environment and the manner in which he has reacted to it. The personalities by whom he is surrounded make up the most important part of that environment, and of all these personalities those of his father and mother are, under normal circumstances, the most influential.

Who and what, then, are these all-powerful beings?

Many, if not most of them, to judge by the evidence of clinic records, are young people recently emerged from their own family homes, who, while there, received little or no training for the new responsibilities they were to assume with marriage. Ordinarily, what they know of parent-child relationships is what they have picked up by observation from the child's standpoint, supplemented by the advice of relatives and friends, and doubtless by some little instruction from the physician or the nurse who cared for the young mother in her confinement. Very rarely a mother has attended a child study class or read literature such as is suggested to such a group, either before the arrival of the baby or afterward.

Undoubtedly thousands of young parents with no more thorough preparation are every year starting their first baby off with the combination of strict attention to essentials and careful disregard of trifles, joined with self-denial under the

temptation to over-pet and pamper, which makes for sound habit formation and free development. A few fundamental principles backed by sufficient self-control will do wonders at this early stage. Later, as complications increase, as the child must adjust himself to conditions not only in the home but in the school and the neighborhood, demands upon the parents increase, and unless their deepening understanding keeps pace with the need, even the good start they have made will not insure a happy outcome. In what proportion of the cases that come to child guidance clinics the parents' difficulties with the child can be traced back to his earliest years cannot be stated, but certainly such cases are impressively numerous among those studied.

What are the situations in which the parent makes such contributions to his child's problem?

From whatever point of view we approach the discussion of parental attitudes and activities toward children, it is almost inevitable that we should begin by considering those which first show themselves toward the young child. If the new-born baby is to survive, it must be continuously cherished and protected; the first great psychological problem for its parents is how and when to modify their original cherishing, protective behavior so as to permit the new individual gradually to establish relations with the world of reality. To failures in this process of modification, of mental weaning, which extends from infancy through childhood and adolescence, may be traced a large proportion of the personal difficulties that hamper the young and baffle and annoy their elders.

Of the forces which interfere with orderly modification of early parental habits, most common, perhaps, is an attitude almost inseparable, in the young, inexperienced parents of a healthy new-born child, from tenderness and devotion itself.

A baby is such a fascinating new toy! Themselves often so little more than children, these fathers and mothers are utterly unprepared to understand the deeper sources of child behavior and the dangers to which the spontaneous expression of their own delight may lead. How can such a bewitching little creature ever be anything but a joy? It is even fun, at first, to find oneself a bond-slave, to feel the imperious small feet trampling one underfoot. Hardly exceptional was the adoring father of one small girl, who complacently remarked, "She's going to be the worst spoiled child you ever saw."

Such inordinate pleasure in continued service at the shrine can hardly fail to influence the behavior of the lively and observant object of adoration. Every small child wants his own way, and will get it as often as he can. For a time, inevitably, he gets it—crying brings food or other attentions that give him pleasure, render him more comfortable. Then, normally, he becomes gradually habituated to denials. If instead every demand, at first inarticulate then articulate, continues to bring a gratifying response, the period of infantile omnipotence is unduly prolonged and the child acquires an altogether false notion of his own importance, of his own place in the scheme of things.

Parents are not the only adults who thus contribute to giving children a false start. The excessive devotion of a wider circle of relatives and friends may double or treble the effect of parental self-immolation, while the devoted service of a paid caretaker may cultivate helplessness and dependence. Aside from such influences, probably the greatest cause of spoiling is illness. When the precious little tyrant is laid low, the mother who had perhaps begun to perceive her own errors of over-indulgence feels the props on which she was endeavoring to bolster up a new firmness give way,

and is swept back into old currents of habit. Each such episode strengthens the bonds that bind the child and its parents to the past.

Yet, sooner or later, the awakening must come. Sometimes mere passage of time piles up difficulties that lead to it: insistence on always having his own way on the part of a twenty-pound creeper may still appeal to his parents as a joke, but by the time he is carrying twice that weight all over the house on a pair of stout legs, the humorous aspects of the situation have usually evaporated. If, meanwhile, a new baby has arrived, if quarters are cramped, if the mother's health is not vigorous, if any one of a score of other complications has arisen—then things have probably long since become serious.

Where parents remain unenlightened as to defects in their handling which are causing trouble, or where, after gaining new insights, they lack the physical or mental power to remodel their own behavior, no limit can be set to the harm that may result. Tantrums of essentially the same character as those observed in the pre-school child occur all along the road to adolescence and beyond; the habit of helplessness, once acquired, may prove too alluring to be abandoned; school relationships, play relationships, work relationships, as well as family relationships, are wrecked by childish emotions masquerading in subtler form to satisfy maturing instincts. If presently the young adult, not "trailing clouds of glory," but dragging a miscellaneous assortment of infantile habit patterns, takes the plunge into matrimony, what can be expected to follow but a renewal of the cycle? On the other hand, the child who escapes spoiling through being subjected to a régime of over-strictness and severity is likely either to become in turn an over-exacting parent or to fly to the opposite extreme of laxity in management.

If there were no middle way between these two extremes there would be little use in discussing the bringing up of children. Of course, there is such a middle way—and in thousands of families it is being found and followed to happy, wholesome maturity. It is to be regretted that no exhaustive analysis of the processes through which such maturity is achieved has yet been made, but this is natural in a civilization where deviations from the normal are so frequent and serious as to compel attention in the interests of protecting society. Students of the early origins of mental disease and delinquency, while seeking to find ways of deflecting children from unwholesome into wholesome paths of development, are gradually enriching our knowledge of these wholesome paths and of how they can be made more attractive than their dangerous alternatives. Perhaps in this roundabout way, or through direct study of happy family, school, and recreational life, material will ultimately be accumulated which may serve as a basis for adequate scientific study of means by which we can assure normal growth of mind and character, as well as body. Meanwhile there is still much to be learned by the study of unfortunate deviations in early years. We have been talking of a few broad general causes of some of the milder of these deviations. Let us turn now to certain details of management in households where loving parents are finding their love an insufficient guide to the management of their young.

Almost invariably one notes that in these homes inconsistent discipline plays a prominent part. Long before the child can discuss the question in words, he has learned whether his mother actually means the prohibitions she lays down, or whether, if he does today what she forbade yesterday, he has a fair chance of "getting by." Suppose he fails;

will loud sounds of grief or manifestations of rage shorten his punishment? Or, again, will persistent teasing finally win the permission he seeks? These and many similar questions he has answered to his own satisfaction—though not, of course, with the conscious deliberation of an adult—long before he is of school age, while his puzzled parent may still be assuming that he is too little to understand all sorts of obvious things.

Learning to play father and mother off against each other is sometimes as easy as getting around one of them alone; for are they not, in numberless cases, simple enough to put the key to the whole situation in the child's hands by discussing his problems and peculiarities in his presence and freely voicing their differences of opinion as to the proper methods of dealing with him? "I sometimes spank her hard," confessed the father of five-year-old Norma Quirk, "but my wife always says, right before her, 'That's not right.'" When parents disagree thus openly, they are not merely undermining their present control of the child: they are perhaps taking the first step toward turning their home into an armed camp of rival factions, in which favoritisms, antagonisms, and jealousies will some day rule.

Hardly less injurious to the child than discussing his faults and disagreeing over his discipline before him is the habit many fond parents form of telling his clever sayings and doings and commenting on his charms in his presence. Thus Kitty Monfort's mother was wont to tell the child's teachers, in her hearing, how remarkable she was—a "genius," a "psychic-medium" and a "wonderful dancer." Brought up to think of herself in these terms, it is not to be wondered at that Kitty posed habitually in the limelight and demanded more attention than any child has a right to expect. Thus again Mrs. Hunt, who was as free in enlarging upon the

faults as upon the virtues of her youngest son, would one day declare, "He torments me so I'd like to kill him, he's just mean clear through," and the next would comment on his latest escapade, "The little devil—you know he's so damned attractive he gets by with murder—not only with me but with everybody. It's his eyes and his saucy ways—and then he's so lovable at heart." Small wonder that her Harry had learned he could go as far as he chose with this doting if peppery parent.

Impulsiveness, ignorance, lack of imagination, seem important characteristics, on the side of their relationships with their children, of the group of parents under consideration. They are by no means an inferior lot, these parents; many of the fathers are rising young business men, many of the mothers intelligent young women who preside over attractive homes. Like most Americans of average or better than average education, they are possessed of enough general information and practical skill to enable them to hold their own in the competitive struggle; what they lack is such an understanding of the workings of the human mind as would give them insight into their own mental processes and those of the other members of their households, including the children whose behavior so puzzles them.

Such inconsistencies and outspoken, impulsive ways are not surprising in untrained young people who less than a decade ago were themselves children in their parents' homes. Unfortunately age, which should bring greater wisdom and stability, seems sometimes to bring only greater irritability instead. Pressure of work, anxiety over finances, ill health, lack of recreational or other outlets—all these we find entering into the picture, and sometimes more than counterbalancing the gain which should come with experi-

ence. One ambitious young professional man, father of two small girls, had not taken a vacation in five years and was with difficulty persuaded by his wife to spend an occasional evening out with her; he was devoted to his children, and his failures to control his temper with them were recognized by both parents as closely related to this program of all work and no play. Another father of a family had not taken a vacation in eleven years. Working mothers obliged to leave their children to the care of others during the day and perplexed by the problem of managing them over nights and week-ends, are also represented; one such mother, a successful teacher with a reputation for maintaining impeccable discipline among the older children she taught, was having much trouble in handling the small son and daughter whom she called for at a neighbor's and took home every evening. On the other hand, there were among the mothers studied a number accustomed to professional or business activities who found days filled with household tasks and child care extremely monotonous and wearing, much as they loved their children and felt themselves bound in duty to see their job through.

Further evidence that youth and inexperience are not the only factors responsible for failures in handling children is furnished by the family in which not the first child but the second or the youngest of several is creating the problem. Thus a father and mother who had reared one son to the age of eleven without encountering any serious difficulty found themselves completely nonplussed by another of three. The truth in this case seemed to be that the haphazard methods which had produced no serious results with the perfectly healthy normal first comer had been too much for his successor, who almost from the beginning had been a ✓ frail and "nervous" baby subject to every infection that

came his way, and who now exhibited practically every characteristic reaction of the spoiled child in its most extreme form. How often, one wonders, do the proud parents of one or more model children owe their successes largely to the fact that they have never been put to some of the severer tests of parental self-control and resourcefulness?

The rôles played by grandparents in the families studied do not tend to strengthen the case for age as the repository of wisdom. One mother dated the beginning of difficulties with her young son to the period during his third year when his grandmother was ill and so nervous that it had seemed necessary to appease the child in any way rather than permit him to raise a rumpus: the temper tantrums in which, at four, he kicked and fought both women appeared a natural consequence. With equal and less pardonable shortsightedness another grandmother was "making a perfect fool" of her young descendant by "calling him pet names and telling him what a wonderful child he was." When asked by her daughter not to emphasize his superiorities, she responded, "How can I help it when every one knows what a perfect little boy he is?" Similarly self-indulgent was the attitude of a fond grandfather who, when his little granddaughter ran to him in the middle of the night, had taken her into bed with him and made so much of her, what with petting and story-telling, that she had formed the habit of breaking her nights in this way.

Children who are thus indulged, over-praised and over-petted, who receive the continuous, concentrated attention of the adults who surround them, whether parents, grandparents, or others, are not only being ill prepared for such ceding of first place in the household as must follow upon the arrival of a brother or sister and for mingling on equal

terms with their peers on playground and in school room; they are also failing to develop their own inner resources. The little girl who "wouldn't let her mother out of her sight," who "wanted to do everything she saw grown people doing," who "would never stick to her playthings long," and could amuse herself only "if you turned the whole house over to her," was as much the product of such over-attention as was the other child who, on being shown the infinitesimal red-faced brother installed overnight in her crib, forthwith demanded, "Throw it away! Throw it away!"

All these pages have been written, and a variety of factors contributing to the spoiling process noted, without any attempt to define our terms. Is it possible, indeed, where so many factors enter in, and spoiling manifests itself in such diversified forms, to arrive at a universally applicable definition or description?

Let us suppose two contrasted types of the spoiled child about to enter school: the first a soft, clinging little chap, who is still bathed and dressed by his mother, won't eat unless he is coaxed into it, weeps if one of his parents does not sit beside him and tell him stories until he goes to sleep; the second a young codger who roars and smashes things when denied his own way, domineers over playmates, and shows off at every opportunity. Is there, or is there not, a fundamental likeness between these boys? Has there or has there not been a common error in the management to which they have been subjected?

This much seems clear: both boys are failing to adjust themselves to a real world in which every child who goes out among his fellows is supposed to have certain rights, to recognize the rights of others, and to be capable of a measure of self-control and self-direction. Both are behaving like

babies, demanding that those about them continue a service suited only to infancy, trusting to "magic words" and "magic gestures" to rule their universe. And those who have been responsible for them have alike failed to make the growing-up process attractive enough, have made too alluring the old paths of dependence on elders who once supplied every need and granted every request. Going a step further, we would hazard the guess that these complementary errors are usually traceable in part to self-indulgence—to a time when the parents or their substitutes enjoyed too much playing the rôle of omnipotent protector. Today they may desire nothing so much as to cast off that rôle; but such was not always their point of view. On the other hand, they may have become as fixed in habits of apprehension as their children have in habits of dependence. Where fears for the safety of a child are permitted to rule, the youngster is inevitably denied that freedom through the exercise of which alone he can develop into a responsible member of society.

CHAPTER III

THE SATISFACTION OF EXAGGERATED PARENTAL LOVE

. . . The whole process of the child's development has as its goal its emancipation from the parents, so that its own life may be free to develop to the fullest without the hindrances that are inevitable if there continues an attachment to the home that is in the nature of a dependence upon it. A full, free development of the personality is only possible if it is free from a crippling dependence of any sort. From this it follows that the problem of the parents in guiding that development can be best met only in the full consciousness of the object to be attained and the possession of enough love on their part to work unconditionally to that end.

WILLIAM A. WHITE, M. D.,
The Mental Hygiene of Childhood.

WHEN parents who are happy in their relations with each other can make such mistakes with their children as have been sketched in the preceding pages, what can be expected of parents who are unhappy in these most vital relationships?

This question, coming just after the introduction of the topic of exaggerated parental love, may seem to imply that disappointment in the adult love-life usually results in such exaggerated love for a child; or, on the other hand, that exaggerated search for satisfaction in a child is usually caused by a disappointed adult love-life.

The first of these possible implications would appear from our study to be clearly without foundation in fact. That is to say, while disappointments in marriage are common among the parents of the problem children known to us,

exaggerated love for a child is only one of many ways in which these disappointments express themselves in parent-child relationships. Some of the other ways will be considered later.

Whether or not there is any basis for the second possible implication is less easy to say. In most of the instances of exaggerated parental love that have come to our attention there is clearly a disappointed adult love-life in the background. In the few cases where no evidence of marital unhappiness is recorded, other disappointments or griefs in the parent's early life or in his adult work-life came to light, and the question arises whether these were sufficient to explain the exaggeration referred to. This question we cannot answer; we can only say that our evidence, while insufficient to prove that marital unhappiness is the main cause of exaggerated parental love in the families studied, does strongly suggest that this is the case; but further suggests that, back of these unhappy marital relations, where they exist, and in cases where evidence of them is lacking, there often exists a relation between one of the parents and his or her own father or mother which, in its turn, has had some causal connection with the marital situation and the extreme devotion to the child. In studies centered, as are those we are dealing with, upon the child, full information regarding the early life of parents is not always obtained; so that even where a special devotion between parent and grandparent is mentioned, the details which would enable us to measure its precise value and influence in the parent's life may be lacking. All that can be done is to note the statements of the parents as they appear in the record, with such comment as seems warranted in the particular instance.

A few illustrations will make concrete these generalizations.

Here, for example, is the mother of a four-year-old boy who is keeping him bound to her by continuing to perform for him a host of minor services—feeding, dressing, bathing—which he should be learning to perform for himself; who is praising him extravagantly before his face and rushing to his aid when he quarrels with other children in a way that is rapidly turning him into the terror of the neighborhood. She is much dissatisfied with the home her husband provides (though he furnishes regular and fairly adequate support) and complains that he spends many evenings out late, gambling with his men friends. She is very closely bound to her mother, who lives nearby and who constantly voices her feeling of superiority to the husband's family and encourages her daughter in the belief that he is wholly responsible for the faults of their son. Though young Mrs. Salberg still finds some good points to comment on in her husband, one feels that she is rapidly drifting into a hypercritical attitude which will further alienate him and may cause a permanent breach. He has already threatened—apparently not very seriously—to leave her.

This seems a commonplace enough situation in which the factors are fairly obvious. Far more deep-rooted are the underlying elements in the next two cases we shall cite.

Stephen Trent, a huge overgrown adolescent weighing some two hundred pounds, was so closely bound to his mother that despite his love for out-of-door life he came home from camp before his time was up because of homesickness. Her marriage, Mrs. Trent said, had not been one of love—the man she cared for, who was her intellectual equal, had married an inferior woman. She had never been happy with her husband, who was beneath her in education and intelligence, and Stephen had been her chief comrade and comfort. In her childhood home she had been the favorite

of an able and much respected father to whom she was devoted, who considered her very intelligent and took a great interest in her education. Probably he too was compensating for an unhappy love-life, for Mrs. Trent states that he and his wife quarreled constantly, the mother resenting his favoritism for their daughter and he hers for their son. The Trents, having but one child, staged their quarrels largely about him, the father blazing out in fury against the boy many times a day, while the mother strove to defend him.

More completely dependent on his mother than either of the boys thus far mentioned was Karl Ireck. At sixteen, fearing his father's wrath when his failure in school should be known, Karl plotted for weeks to run away from home, yet had no sooner reached a city some hundreds of miles distant than he was overcome by the thought of what his mother would be suffering and gave himself up to the police. This grown boy was still sleeping in his mother's room; during most of his life she had kept him close at home, away from other boys. The emotional character of her hold on him may be judged from one incident related: when he was eleven she discovered that he had been smoking and told him she would die if he continued; he never smoked again. In telling of his home-coming after his runaway experience he declared that he found his mother "almost dead." "She was awfully weak, and told me if I hadn't come back she'd have been gone in two days."

The mother who employed this simple device for controlling her son freely stated that she had never been happy in her marriage, though her husband had been good to her; she would never, she said, advise any girl to marry. She had been a lonely immigrant girl when Mr. Ireck proposed to her, and in her desperate homesickness she had consented to

marry him upon his promise to send her home soon for a long visit. Karl, her first son, had in fact been born in the old country, where she remained for many months. Her second son, who at fourteen was a much more independent individual than his brother, was also apparently the mother's real favorite; but Karl had served as an outlet for her pent-up emotions, and finding him malleable, she had fashioned him into a helpless weakling. To this result Mr. Ireck's attempts to dominate the boy had undoubtedly contributed largely—but that half of the story will be told elsewhere.¹

That fathers as well as mothers are subject to blind emotional drives in which they seek to find compensation in loving a child for the disappointments life has brought them has already been intimated. We offer two illustrations.

Mr. Ulner, a young business man of fair education, had loved a girl of different religious training whom he could not marry. Resigning himself as best he could, he proposed to a young woman of his own faith for whom he felt only friendly interest. She was unhappy in her home life, and therefore, though not especially enamored of Mr. Ulner, accepted him. The marriage thus seemed a fair enough arrangement between contracting parties whose feelings were not much involved. Unfortunately, while Mrs. Ulner promptly fell in love with her husband all the man's devotion was poured into the new channel opened up by the arrival of a baby girl. He hung over the little creature, lavished attention upon her, insisted upon assuming much of the actual care of her. Compelled daily to witness this outpouring of an adoration which was in painful contrast to the lukewarm regard she herself received, Mrs. Ulner became extremely jealous of her own daughter; and quite naturally when a small son

¹ See p. 47.

arrived she turned to him for consolation and developed a favoritism which matched the father's own.

Thirteen years of life under these conditions had made of the girl as complete a spoiled child as could well be imagined. When such equilibrium as the family possessed was upset by the mother's death and Mr. Ulner's subsequent failure in business and remarriage, Isabel was brought to the clinic as an alternative to placing her in a mental ward for observation of her temper tantrums—her despairing father's original plan.

Fanny Easton, when at the age of seven she was brought to the clinic by her mother because of certain nervous habits, presented a contrasting picture. She was a charming little girl, but over-sensitive and fearful; though of decidedly superior intelligence she was worrying over her school work to an absurd degree and seemed afraid of her teacher. She had suffered from severe early illnesses, but was now in good health with no discoverable defects. Her fastidious appetite and the above-mentioned nervous habits—blinking of eyes, twitching of facial muscles—were causing her parents much anxiety.

Mr. Easton's attitude toward this only child was as blind and complete an adoration as any we have encountered. Fanny was the object of his constant solicitude; she was not allowed to go on the street alone, even to do an errand for her mother at the nearby grocery; the mother's duty was to watch over her every instant, and for any least mishap to her precious charge she was held rigidly accountable. Under this régime Mrs. Easton was living a completely shut-in life, without social contacts or intellectual stimulus; for anything she might wish to do—taking a child study course, going to an afternoon tea—would have meant, in her hus-

band's view, neglect of her supreme obligation. Though on affectionate terms with both father and daughter, the mother seemed lonely and sad. Her place with them both, she said, was a wholly secondary one; for Fanny ardently reciprocated her father's devotion and basked in his praise. Small wonder that, accustomed as she was to this hot-house atmosphere, school contacts proved disturbing and the disciplinary measures of the ordinary classroom terror-inspiring to the little girl.

What sort of a man was this father, who in the name of love was doing so great an injury to his child?

Apparently a rather mild and timid individual, he was known to have abandoned a position in the business world which demanded some ambition and energy for a safe-and-sure job under civil service. Of this choice he was manifestly ashamed; he had even gone so far as to instruct his wife and daughter not to recognize him if they should meet him in uniform when they were walking with friends. Fanny evidently served as his chief consolation for a frustrated, uncongenial work-life.

That she likewise consoled him for older and deeper hurts appeared from Mrs. Easton's account of his childhood. He had lost his mother when a small boy, his life after that loss had been extremely unhappy, and in his unhappiness he had made a cult of his mother's memory, looking back with longing to his few happy years with her. In a sense, Fanny was now taking the mother's place as recipient of his childish, clinging devotion.

One other example of exaggerated parental love may perhaps be offered without straining too far the patience of the reader—that of a ten-year-old only son whose parents were about equally responsible for his spoiling. Harold

had never escaped from the bonds of infantile dependence on his mother; he could still hardly dress himself, and the task of getting him off to school in the morning was an almost impossible one, for he would insist on coming back time after time for one more kiss. He demanded that his mother or father lie down with him at bedtime, he sucked his thumb and wanted to be his mother's baby. About family errands and school work alike he was utterly irresponsible, showing no interest in his studies, day-dreaming instead of concentrating on the task in hand, and though of good intelligence, doing poor work. With his playmates he was unpopular because bossy and dictatorial; he preferred the society of adults, would rather hang about the house than go out to play—though some few sports, like roller skating and swimming, he did enjoy. He wanted to be waited on, hated to do even the simplest thing for himself.

Shortly before Harold was referred to the clinic by the visiting teacher of his school Mrs. Upton had begun to revolt against the slavery which the earlier management of her son had riveted upon her; but her efforts to free herself had thus far proved unavailing. Despairingly she pointed out the boy's resemblance to his father. Mr. Upton had been, not an only son, indeed, but the youngest of a large family; he had been waited on hand and foot by a devoted mother, and had reciprocated by a devotion so complete that his courtship of his present wife had dragged on for ten years, until the mother's death set him free to marry. He now expected of his wife all the attentions to which his mother had accustomed him; and as she was twenty years his junior, she resented his attitude. Yet her very dissatisfaction with her marriage had been influencing her to give to her son a type of devotion that was making him into a mother-dependent like his father. And when, at last, she reached the point of

being ready radically to change her handling of the boy, his father, still in many ways as infantile as the youngster, blocked the path of progress, insisting that she discontinue her relation with the clinic on the alleged ground that Harold's sole difficulty had been with one school subject, in which he was now improving.

In all but one of the six illustrations that have been given, the early home of one parent, or the figure of a grandparent, appears quite definitely as an influence which has helped to determine the parent's attitude both toward the partner in marriage and toward the child now so peculiarly precious. Among the records of children involved in an over-intense parent-child relationship with which we are familiar, the proportion in which the present situation is thus obviously overshadowed by an earlier generation, though impressive, is not so large as the ratio of one to six would suggest; we have deliberately chosen certain cases for presentation because of the interesting questions they raise. That an unusually close emotional bond between parent and grandparent has existed in any large proportion of similar cases we would not venture to assert, but it seems worth while to bear in mind the possibility that such a linking up of generation to generation may occur oftener than we realize. How commonly, in the experience of readers of these pages, is the parent of today who is injuring his child by exaggerated displays of devotion, an individual who has brought over into adulthood more than the usual attachment to one of the parents who presided over his early home?

More commonly, the situation that presented itself as an explanation of the exaggerated parent-child relationship to the workers who gathered family records of these cases is that of unsatisfactory marital relations. Mother after

mother confided her unhappiness: sometimes that she "admired and respected" her husband but could not love him; sometimes that she received no satisfaction whatever from intercourse, or that she dreaded it because of her fear of pregnancy. One mother who was seriously hampering her ten-year-old son in his relations with teachers and playmates by her misguided efforts to help and protect him, proved to be suffering not only from a bitterly-complained-of frigidity, but from a glandular imbalance due to the menopause as well—a condition fortunately susceptible to treatment, which wrought an apparently complete cure and enabled her to relax her grip upon the boy. The fathers who showed a corresponding over-devotion to their children were, in this group of cases, fewer than the mothers, and they confided less in the clinic workers; but some of them were known to be equally dissatisfied.

In what has been thus far written regarding exaggerated parent-child devotion the emphasis has been wholly upon the parent's attitude and such causes as could be discovered for it. This is because, to the writer, the parent's search for satisfaction in the child has seemed to be the chief determining factor in these relationships. The matter may however be looked at from the child's point of view. Early in life many children go through a phase of special devotion to the parent of the opposite sex. The little boy's preference for the mother often leads him to show jealousy and even hatred for the father—a childish jealousy and hatred, springing from his wish to keep his mother all to himself, which under happy family conditions speedily melts away as his sense of identity with the father and love for him grow. The little girl, who during infancy, like her brother, commonly prefers the mother, during the first few years of growing independence which follow often transfers her chief

devotion to her father; and while at this stage, tends to demand all his devotion and to show jealousy of the mother with whom she must divide that devotion. This phase the girl passes out of, like the boy, through the path of identification—in her case, of identification with and love for the mother; thus ceasing to resent the division of the father's devotion between the two. Where the normal processes of identification with the parent of the same sex are interfered with, the child may persist in a preference for the parent of the opposite sex which sometimes grows more intense with the passing years and comes seriously to hamper the whole development.

Regarding the prevalence of this pattern of love relationships in early childhood our reading of guidance clinic records offers no conclusive evidence. Among young children with whose cases we are familiar a strong preference for the parent of the same sex is expressed almost if not quite as commonly as such a preference for the parent of the opposite sex; a fact which usually seems explicable enough in terms of the personal qualities of the parents and their handling of the child. Among older children there are a moderate number—those referred to in this section among them—whose cases may be regarded as illustrating the development of a mother-son or father-daughter devotion that failed to be resolved at the appropriate age.

In this connection the attitudes of both parents appear to have determining value. If the boy with the softly doting or fiercely clinging mother who finds her only consolation in him has a harsh, violent-tempered father with whom he finds it difficult to identify himself (as did Stephen Trent and Karl Ireck), he is doubly doomed to an exaggerated maternal attachment—for some one he must love; if he has a father who (like Harold Upton's) is well-nigh as infantile

and dependent as he, identification with that father will not help him to grow up. The little girl whose extravagant delight in her father's attentions and absurd displays of jealousy toward her mother are met by maternal irritation tinged with an answering jealousy is in grave danger of becoming fixed in what would otherwise be swiftly fleeting attitudes. Ill health or absorption in other interests on a parent's part may lead to an unresponsiveness that will be felt by the child as a rebuff, with similar unfortunate consequences. That children differ in degree of sensitiveness to such rebuffs is probable, since some cheerfully survive what would be crushing blows to others; that they differ—like Karl Ireck and his brother—in resistiveness to molding influences is likewise probable; so that the boy or girl who turns out a complete mother- or father-dependent may well have been more susceptible to parental pressure than the average child. But neither sensitiveness nor power of resistance can be measured in advance.

Those who work with disordered lives, whether in clinics for children or in private practice or in agencies for adults, find numerous instances in which this pattern of parent-child relationships dominates the picture. The boy of four who has no notion of feeding or dressing himself or of attempting to control his temper; the boy of fifteen who can't "stick it out" at camp because he misses his mother so; the man of thirty who puts off his marriage from year to year because he can't leave his mother in loneliness—these, and hosts of other variants on the theme, are familiar figures to those who deal with ill-adjusted personalities. That the mother of such a boy or man is primarily responsible for his childishness will, we believe, usually appear upon inquiry. What, in turn, is responsible for the emotional craving that has driven her to seek satisfaction in binding her son to her?

This question is one which can probably be completely answered, in any given case, only through full analysis by an expert in these matters; the suggestions as to possible explanations which we have offered are to be understood as mere suggestions derived from a review of clinic evidence. Yet while the individual who can conduct an absolutely merciless self-analysis is exceedingly rare—if indeed he exists at all—most of us can make some progress in understanding ourselves if we keep our minds open and eager, and refuse to be satisfied with surface explanations. If we realize, for example, that a love disappointed in its object never ceases to exist but always, sooner or later, seeks another outlet, and that one of the most obvious of these outlets is devotion to a child, we shall be on our guard as to the real motives that lead us to immolate ourselves in the service of any small person attached to us. If we cannot train ourselves to put the satisfaction of seeing him—or her—grow strong and independent above any satisfaction in being turned to for help and consolation, we may be sure that there is danger ahead.

CHAPTER IV

THE SATISFACTION OF PARENTAL IDEALS

A child needs to grow like a tree, quietly, in one spot, at his own pace and in his own manner. Many a child's intellectual progress would have been satisfactory but for the eagerness of parents and teachers in trying to give too many kinds of things at once.

BERTRAND RUSSELL, *The Training of Young Children*, in Harper's Magazine, July, 1927.

A NATURAL and inevitable accompaniment of normal parental love is the wish to see the child succeed. The father or mother who did not feel pride and pleasure in a youngster's school achievements or exploits on the athletic field, who did not experience regret over his failure in anything he set out to do, would be a rather queer person. Nevertheless as with love itself there are limits, felt though not precisely definable, beyond which ambition for the child, satisfaction in his success, and concern over his failure cannot pass without appearing overdrawn and exaggerated, without being at once evidence of mental ill-health in the parent and a menace to the mental health of the child. One ingredient of such exaggerated concern is a conspicuous self-regarding element; it is no longer wholly or chiefly for Tom's own sake that he is to take honors in Greek or win the debate, but to satisfy some deep-seated craving of his father or mother—some ideal that is as much a part of them as any of the tastes and distastes, desires and antipathies that have swayed their own lives.

A survey of the clinic records known to us in which such parental ideals play a noteworthy part would seem to indi-

cate that it is mainly over educational issues that ideal-ridden parents grow intense. Since school furnishes to the child the chief and often the only testing-out place for his abilities, it is natural that his ambitions should cluster about achievement there. When he fails to show such ambitions, or when his ambitions are persistently defeated, the attitudes assumed by his parents are certain to exert a tremendously important influence upon the next stage in his development.

In considering the cases at hand in which parental attitudes over such issues were noticeably unfortunate, one finds that a large proportion of the parents fall into one of two groups—though there are others who string along between.

The first of these groups is made up of fathers and mothers who are proud of their own achievements or those of their forebears and family connections. As one mother put it, there "had been no let-downs on either side of the family," and her concern over her second son's poor standing in school was clearly bound up with her pride in this record. Both parents, in this case, were inordinately proud of the brilliant college record being made by their eldest son, and found it extremely difficult to accept the apparent inferiority of the second. As a matter of fact, this boy too had excellent ability, and actually cared more for success than his indifferent manner and lack of concentration upon school tasks seemed to indicate. Less of a student than his brother, he had lived for years in the atmosphere of adulation with which the other was surrounded and had come to accept his own minor rôle without much question. His scholarly father's relative indifference to him was none the less felt by the boy with a keenness that astonished his parents when they came to realize it. Curiously enough, in the course of

the study of this family it appeared that the father who was thus neglecting his less promising son had himself grown up feeling himself an unwanted youngest child whose peculiarly brilliant father took little interest in him.

The situation in this family is mentioned first because it represents a mild degree of the tendency on the part of parents which we are discussing. Probably all of us are familiar with households in which such disappointments and anxieties play an equally active part. Nothing could be more natural than that parents should wish to see all their children reach a high level of achievement; and since discriminating between gradations of intellectual equipment and of special abilities and disabilities requires an expert, it is not strange that many a father and mother should be puzzled when a son or daughter fails to measure up to family standards. What seems curious to us, however, as we study the records at hand, is that parents so often fail to realize how their disappointment in and anxiety over a child may react upon him, producing a discouragement which slows up effort and cuts down accomplishment.

It is perhaps most often with adolescent boys and girls, whose school performances are naturally taken as indicating more precisely than those of young children what is to be expected of them later in life, that parents experience the severest blows to their pride. This, however, is merely a guess, for our records afford equally striking examples of situations in which the parents of small youngsters show similar extreme attitudes. We offer first two illustrations in which adolescents figure, then two from the younger group.

Henry Joslin was a successful business man of good standing in the community who took much pride in his position. He had attended the State University and was an active supporter of his church, though not opposed to worldly

amusements. Compared with his own father, who had been one of the strictest and severest of the old puritanical school, he felt himself to be quite a liberal; but like his father he was exceedingly set and determined, and given to frequent use of the rod in enforcing discipline. His wife, a charming, gentle woman, while not objecting on principle to corporal punishment, said that her husband had often been so angry with their eldest son that she had feared he would seriously injure him.

Henry Jr., a youth of nearly eighteen when he became known to the clinic, was considered by the friends of the family and by his employer—the proprietor of a large art store—to be a “prince.” Yet his own father was hardly able to endure his presence in the home. After a school career that had been one long series of humiliations to his parents he had recently dropped out of high school and gone to work. Though he had never done anything in the least disgraceful, Mr. and Mrs. Joslin disapproved of many of the young people with whom he associated, and were in a chronic state of expecting the worst to happen. The man, when interviewed, seemed to have to rack his brains to think of any desirable traits in this son. Since he could not feel pride in the boy he appeared only to wish to be rid of him. He had more than once, in a rage, ordered Henry from the house, though a sense of duty, doubtless joined with a regard for appearances, kept him from enforcing the command to get out. That anything might have been made of his son’s own spontaneous interests—in horticulture and in sketching—had seemingly never occurred to him. He had refused point blank to let the boy study art—he “wasn’t going to have a dauber in his family.”

Mrs. Lowman had been, by her own report, an extraordinarily brilliant student whose marriage had interfered

with a promising career; and when her eldest daughter, after doing well through the grades, began to bring home poor marks from high school, she overwhelmed the girl with reproaches and attempted by nagging and talk of her own past successes to shame her into doing better. Exactly the opposite to the desired effect was produced by this line of treatment. Teresa, who was possessed of definitely superior intelligence that should have enabled her to do high grade work in school and college, continued to stand poorly and developed a special dislike for certain studies, due apparently to her mother's accounts of how *she* had formerly excelled in them. One teacher the girl quite definitely and consciously identified with her mother, cordially detesting her in consequence. Other factors in the family life helped to make of Teresa the depressed, unhappy child whose talk of suicide led to her being referred to the clinic; but that her mother's attitude was among the most powerful of the injurious influences that played upon her was evident.

Mrs. Yale came from an old New England family of whose record through six generations she was proud. Such excellent stock ought, she thought, to have "produced something better than Nora"—her eight-year-old daughter. Nora was doing poorly in school; her earlier teachers had thought her "peculiar" and "retarded," though her present teacher considered, rather, that she was "slow" and "discouraged." Her mother was much embarrassed that children in families of less standing should get better marks, and was severe and harshly critical in her handling of the child. In the psychometric tests Nora showed extreme timidity, giving the impression that all initiative and originality had been stamped out of her; yet in spite of these handicapping difficulties she made a score that fell within the limits of the average for her age. That repressive parental attitudes—her father's

as well as her mother's—had been largely responsible for the child's poor school work in that they had rendered her timid and self-doubting seemed certain when rapid improvement followed upon modification of those attitudes.

Our last example of the superior parent who looks to his child for the fulfillment of his ideals is the father of two charming daughters and a three-year-old son. The little boy did not seem to be progressing quite normally and both parents were manifestly anxious lest he prove to be subnormal in intelligence. Mr. Prentice, a professional man of standing, had come with his wife to interview the clinic worker following examination of the child. When the findings and recommendations of the clinic had been carefully gone over, with detailed discussion of such points as Udo's verbal ability, memory, motor control, and so forth, and emphasis on the point that the present test showed a marked gain over one of six months before, the father showed himself not satisfied and demanded to know whether his son would be able to go through college. The worker, after trying to avoid committing herself regarding so distant an issue, was finally forced by the man's persistence to admit that probably the child would not be able to meet college requirements. "Then," came the insistent question, "will he be able to go through high school?" Realizing the high tension behind these questions, but unable to avoid the issue, the worker answered that she did not know. At this Mr. Prentice burst out: "If that's the case, I don't want to raise him. I would rather he died this week than feel I had produced a moron. Why, I don't know anyone who hasn't gone through college! All my associates are college people. I was an honor man myself."

That such an outpouring could come only from a sick mind seems evident enough. Details of Mr. Prentice's

youthful experiences and present difficulties which came to light during the study of his son reveal clearly the sources of a profound feeling of inferiority against which the man had been struggling since boyhood. The partial compensation which he had achieved through academic and professional success was threatened by the prospect of failure in his son and heir, and under the impending blow his carefully built up confidence gave way.

To how slight a degree mere intellectual brilliancy and academic culture can protect one against emotional disturbances is evident in this instance.

More pitiable still is the plight of those parents who make up the second of our two groups; parents who, themselves denied the opportunities for education and advancement which they craved, have centered their hopes upon a child whom they count on to carry their own ideals to fulfillment. When the child assumes the assigned rôle satisfactorily, all may go well—though guidance clinics see not a few youngsters of promise hopelessly spoiled by their overjoyed and infatuated elders. When the child balks at carrying out the parental program, the scene is set for a family tragi-comedy that sometimes verges on genuine tragedy.

Such a tragi-comic situation is one in which a mother who had cherished since before her son's birth the dream of seeing him become a physician was forced at last to realize that he could not complete high school. Similar in various respects is the drama in which Mr. Ireck the butcher and his son Karl played leading parts.

Karl's dependence on his unhappy mother and the way in which her maternal devotion had been making a weakling of him has already been sketched.¹ His father was a hardly

¹See page 31.

less unhappy being. Put to work on his parents' farm in Eastern Europe at six, he had neglected such opportunities for education as he might have had and had run away from home at an early age. As he knocked about the world from one unskilled, underpaid job to another, he came to a realization of the value of the education he had failed to acquire. The coming of his first son opened the doors of hope that had seemed to be forever closed: he identified himself with the boy—Karl should become a lawyer or something great. To be sure, the boy's interests, as he grew, seemed to center rather on mechanical than on intellectual pursuits, but he did fairly well in the grades, and until he entered high school the father continued to cherish his dream. Then came a rude awakening. Karl failed in Latin and wanted to drop out. Mr. Ireck was furious, and by force and threats compelled him to continue. Desperate, Karl played truant occasionally for relief, lying to his teachers. The end of the year came, and with it failure. To ward off his father's anger, Karl reported passing marks in all examinations. Cautiously he soon after asked what his father would do if he didn't continue in school. With a great burst of wrath Mr. Ireck replied that Karl would get out of the house or he'd kill him.

The tale of the boy's runaway and ignominious surrender to the police when a day's journey from home has already been told. His father, meeting him at the station upon his return, nearly fainted from excess of emotion and assured Karl that he need not reenter school and might choose his own work. Thus pathos and comedy are intermingled as the episode concludes.

One other illustration, from a family setting considerably higher in the social scale, will suffice. The father of eight-year-old Florence Vail, an ambitious, hard-working young

dentist, had put himself through college and was inordinately proud of himself and his accomplishments; the mother, who had gone only part way through high school, was "full of humility and revolt"—feelings which were kept at a high pitch by her husband's jeering attitude toward her efforts at self-education. The two parents thus represent the two groups of which we have been talking. United in little else, they were as one in their efforts to push and prod their small daughter into doing a higher grade of school work than her good but not remarkable ability seemed to make possible. Much of her nervousness and her poor school adjustment was clearly traceable to this prodding and to the constant faultfinding that accompanied it; though other causes bound up with the maladjustment between her father and mother, which produced a most unhealthy emotional life in the home, also contributed their share.

While educational ideals appear, in our group of cases, to be the most common stumbling-blocks for parental pride, this, as already intimated, is probably because the educational field is the only one in which most children can hope to distinguish themselves. In a civilization which offers to adults so much greater material rewards for success in other lines than in purely intellectual undertakings, it is curious to note how parents who are far from intellectual in their tastes and interests bow before school standards of achievement. For many of them, clearly, promotions and high marks are merely conspicuous symbols of that general superiority which they yearn to believe stamps their tribe; and if the mental aspects of that superiority receive most emphasis, it is perhaps because standards in this field are more clearly formulated than in any other, and because success here is generally believed to correlate most closely with

success in after life. However, parents who grow equally excited over issues of manners and morals are also represented in our group.

For example, it was Hugh Norton's laziness, dirtiness, slovenliness, and bad table manners which were largely responsible for the violence of his father's and mother's distaste for him—though other causes had helped to undermine their original parental love. Hugh was, they declared, an "alien" in their otherwise congenial home; and the fact that he was making an excellent school record, was entirely honorable and truthful and had never brought the family name into any sort of disrepute, neither solaced them nor mitigated their aversion.

Victor Nielson's mother, in similar fashion, complained bitterly of his untidiness, uncleanness and carelessness; all her eight brothers and sisters together, she declared, had not been so destructive as Victor. This mother's immaculate and cheerless person and home spoke volumes as to her standards, and led one to question whether any normal nine-year-old could have satisfied them. On the moral side, Victor fell equally short of his parents' avowed standards as to truth telling—though in this field the superior performance of his elders was not so noteworthy, since they dealt constantly in threats which they did not carry out.

Even more serious are the situations that arise when a child sets himself against the parents' ideals of religious practice, or violates accepted standards of sex morality. The conflict between father and son over religious issues is well illustrated by the experience of the older brother in the narrative entitled "Conquered"; an experience that closely parallels many recorded in fiction and biography. Avoidance of such conflict by a ten-year-old boy who "lately has taken to feigning religious ardor to stand in with his father" and to

escape threatened beatings is reported from another home. The conflict over sex standards and behavior—in some of its aspects, particularly that of the erring daughter, a familiar fictional theme, in others, as that of solitary practises, relatively unfamiliar—is vividly illustrated by the histories of a number of children. These, however, are reserved for a later chapter.

For the most part, the material gathered together in this section illustrates a common human tendency, that of the parent to identify himself with his child and seek satisfaction through the child, carried to unreasonable extremes. Many parents who behave in this way are doubtless, like some of the fathers and mothers we have mentioned, seeking to make up to themselves for the disappointments life has brought them or for the corroding sense of inferiority to their fellows which persists even under an outward appearance of success. Like the parents discussed in the preceding chapter, they are using their children for personal ends instead of being guided in their relations with them by detached, impersonal consideration of what is best for the youngsters themselves. Such attempts to relive one's own life in one's children are as futile as any that come under the observation of child guidance clinics, and few procedures on the part of respectable parents are more destructive to the children. One of the clearest of common-sense principles would seem to be that each child's work in life and the training that is to fit him for it should be determined in accordance with his own abilities and interests, that they should never be forcibly imposed upon him by parental authority. Unfortunately there are still many parents who fail to grasp this principle.

CHAPTER V

THE SATISFACTION OF AN IMPULSE TO DOMINATE

No amount of guilt on the part of the evil-doer absolves us from responsibility for the consequences upon him and others of our way of treating him, or for our continuing responsibility for the conditions under which persons develop perverse habits.

JOHN DEWEY,
Human Nature and Conduct.

THE topic of domineering conduct toward children on the part of parents is so closely related to that of parents' efforts to realize their ideals in children as to be nearly inseparable. In most of the cases cited in the preceding chapter the parent who was emphasizing his ideal for a child displayed a tendency to domineer over the youngster. In the illustrations offered in the present section, however, ideals regarding achievement do not play a conspicuous part; and while the parents' standards in manners and morals, which enter into their ideals for their children, do have a share in determining their attitudes, there are other important determinants as well.

Take, for example, the case of Mrs. Trowbridge, who since her son was a baby had been devoting her energies largely to the task of "breaking his will." At thirteen, Rex ran wild with a tough gang that stole; he lied, took food and money from home, neglected his work, was tardy, played truant, fought back when his mother beat him, ran away from home, scorned the religious training she tried to impose. Assuredly, he violated every standard, disappointed every hope his mother may have cherished; but her violent en-

deavors to impose her standards upon him by constant beatings seem imperfectly accounted for by the existence of an ideal of what her son should be. Rather, we are disposed to look back into her own life for deeper-lying causes that may explain her mental set in favor of domineering, repressive behavior.

In this case, our backward look brings us little information: we learn that Mrs. Trowbridge was brought up in Germany, came to the United States as a young girl, supported herself by doing housework and sewing, married at forty, was not at all pleased when, several years later, she discovered she was to have a child, but resigned herself by the aid of her religion. Except that she had by this time become something of a religious fanatic, this is all we know of her earlier life. How far her unwilling maternity may have colored her attitude toward the boy is a question. She was unable to nurse him, and as an infant he was a difficult—and doubtless, to one of her disposition, an exasperating—feeding problem. Nevertheless, she is said to have been devoted to him as a little fellow. She taught him to pray, and read Bible stories to him, a program which he “stood till he entered school” at five. Since that time, the contest of wills between the two had been incessant.

Looking back over the meager record of this woman's early life one would like to know the character of the home in which she was reared, the attitudes her parents took toward their children. Was she subjected to what one Lutheran pastor calls “Germanic discipline,” and was the repressed anger that so often is the child's response to such discipline one of the determinants of her later reactions to her own son? We cannot know; but such similarities in the disciplinary systems under which succeeding generations are reared occur often enough in our reading so that we are

impelled to ask ourselves what is the nature of the link between a domineered-over child and that child's later domineering behavior as a parent.

An example suggestive of such a connection is that furnished by the Trent family. Mrs. Trent's over-indulgence of her only son, Mr. Trent's harsh, explosive treatment of him, have been mentioned.¹ That long hours of work, worry over business difficulties, a sense of his own general inferiority and his wife's superiority, had rendered the man irritable is probable; that, knowing how much dearer the boy was to his wife than he had ever been, he may also have been stirred by spasms of jealousy is likewise probable. But when we learn that the father's own father was a strict disciplinarian; that following his death the mother married again, after which her son never felt the same toward her; that the stepfather was very severe, and that the boy ran away from home at fourteen: we cannot but feel that an important link in the chain of explanation of his later conduct has been supplied.

Situations similar to those in these two families, some of them clearly repetitions of situations in which the father or mother had figured as a child, some of them not identifiable as such repetitions—possibly only because of insufficient information—are exceedingly common in the experience of social case workers. Among those in the clinic cases under review we choose two for presentation here, in each instance because of the inherent interest attaching to both the present and the past family situation. In so doing we are not implying, still less seeking to impose, a belief that domination over children in one generation necessarily or usually points to the existence of domination in the preceding generation. We are merely raising a question as to the frequency of such

¹See page 30.

connections, and suggesting that thought along this line, and the gathering of impartial evidence, might have a wholesome influence on parental behavior.

A more self-critical mother than Mrs. Eaton probably never came to any clinic. In her management of her son Francis, aged eight, brought in as a discipline problem, she had, she said, "sunk to the level of a tenement-house mother." As her husband was a successful consulting engineer, and their home, measured by external standards, one of high grade, this phrase expressed the sense of utter failure and hopelessness which it was clear she felt.

How had this mother, at once exceptionally attractive and keenly intelligent, come to such a pass?

From her own account, she took very seriously the management of her home and children; everything had to be just so, her plans must be carried out exactly. She had read various books on the management of children and had attempted to follow the advice given. In particular, she had embarked upon the business of parenthood with a conception of discipline as an expression of the parent's authority over the child—a conception derived from one of these books; she was determined to be the master in her relations with her son. From an early age, Francis had resisted, and, her resolution stiffening, the two had settled down to a contest of wits and endurance. As direct commands grew increasingly ineffective nagging became the order of the day, with attempts at reasoning broken by threats and by impulsive punishments for which no explanation was offered. She had resorted also to appeals for good behavior because of her "nervous condition," and again had blamed the boy for causing that condition. Not only were all these measures proving ineffective, but her son had developed an

active dislike for her. She was desperately unhappy over the situation, and bitterly ashamed.

With the mother's management of the child Mr. Eaton had interfered little. His professional duties took him away from home a great deal; when he was there he refrained from criticising his wife and did all he could to relieve the strain upon her by planning trips and other pleasures for her. To all appearances his influence, so far as it went, tended to lessen the tension between mother and son.

Thus far we have discovered nothing that can adequately explain Mrs. Eaton's attitude toward Francis, her persistent efforts to subjugate his will. That she found such a theory of discipline embodied in a book is no sufficient explanation for the intensity with which she had clung to her authoritative régime; some deeper emotional force is needed to account for persistence in a policy which for years had been producing increasingly unsatisfactory results.

It is in this mother's early life experience that we find the clue sought.

In strong contrast to her husband's early home, which had been ruled by a kind, affectionate father and had presented few irritants to the young people growing up in it, hers had been most unhappy. Her father had been selfish, quick-tempered, easily disturbed by trifles, a severe disciplinarian; from their earliest years the children had been warned by their mother to be quiet, their father was coming; he could never endure any noise, sternly repressed their play activities, and would not permit them to have their friends at the house. Though he professed affection for his children he had little to do with them; his repressive influence upon them had not only made their childhood and youth wretched, it had, his daughter believed, been directly responsible for her own "nervousness" and that of other members of the

family. She thus held him largely accountable for her troubles with Francis; for she did not doubt that she was in great measure responsible for these.

One phase of the situation Mrs. Eaton, with all her intelligence, had not grasped, though she was finally led to accept the clinic's interpretation of it: she had not perceived that in her management of her son she was carrying out a repressive régime similar in many ways to that which had wrecked her own childhood, or that her son's resistance to her was similar to her own resistance to her father. That her father was responsible for her "nervousness," and that her "nervousness" largely accounted for her mishandling of Francis was one way of putting the matter; that she had been unconsciously copying many of her father's erroneous methods and that her son had responded much as she had herself responded to similar treatment was another and less palatable way. Nor did it appear that she had ever considered what life experiences might account for the bitterly condemned behavior of her father.

Such a retracing of the pattern of parental behavior is of course often more or less deliberate; whether or not the parent in his youth resented the harsh treatment he received, he frequently acquires the conviction that the methods of discipline to which he was subjected were the correct methods.

Here, for instance, is John Osborn—not yet thirty-five and the father of five boys; a hard-working, serious-minded man, devoted to his home, strict in the observance of his own religious duties and in seeing that his children live up to theirs. Only Don, the middle one of the quintet, was giving trouble, but that trouble was serious; Don was failing in school, was playing truant, and had stolen money a number

of times, not only from the home but from the neighbors—several dollars at a time. He was said to go with “bad boys,” but information on this point was vague.

Two years before, when Don was only seven, he had suffered from a fall which resulted in a fracture of the skull. Recovery had apparently been complete, but when more than a year later he began to misbehave, his parents at once concluded that his misdeeds were due to this injury, that he was not responsible. For this reason the customary discipline of whipping with a strap was not at first applied. Warnings conveyed by stories of what happened to other bad boys and similar methods of control were however without effect, and ultimately whippings were resumed.

In this home it was the father who did all the repressing and punishing; the mother, though an excellent housekeeper and devoted to her children, seemed to have little control of them. When the father was at home (he worked at night) the boys were models of behavior; they were trained to address him always as “Father,” to answer him always with a “Yes, sir” or “No, sir”; they were not permitted to go out, or to play actively in the house. When he was away, they played outdoors and enjoyed more freedom generally. This was the parents’ report, the mother meekly agreeing with the father in condemning her own lax handling of the children. Yet the three older boys, when interviewed separately at the clinic, gave a quite different version: they were afraid of their father, and devoted to their mother; they did not, they said, take advantage of her, but they made a point of “sneaking out on him” whenever they could—they felt they were really accomplishing something when they “put one over” on him.

While the state of mind here described was common to all three boys, it was really only Ned and Don, the second and

third, who attempted active evasion of their father's commands. Van, the eldest, was a timid youngster, completely cowed by this overbearing parent; when his brothers "beat it" out of the house at hours supposed to be dedicated to home work he remained behind to wrestle with his lessons, then crept away to read, day-dream, or do puzzles. He had until lately played with dolls—only his father's prohibition of this practice had put a stop to it—and he still sewed more or less. His brothers scorned him as a "sissy." In the clinic's opinion he was actually a more serious problem than Don. Only Ned, the second son, won the approval of all concerned. Even his parents, despite his occasional disobedience, recognized him as more promising than his docile elder brother, and Don, taller though a year younger, looked up to him with respect because he was stronger physically and mentally. He tried to restrain Don from stealing, and sometimes succeeded in getting him out of temptation's way.

That there was something in the inborn nature of each of these boys or his early developmental experiences which determined his reaction to the parental handling seems probable, for favoritism was not one of Mr. Osborn's faults and all were treated alike; but that Van's natural timidity and Don's natural rebelliousness and recklessness were increased by the treatment they received seems equally clear. The conviction of all his elders, both in home and school, that Don was irresponsible as a result of his head injury, though without basis in fact so far as scientific investigation could determine, may also have influenced the boy by making him feel he could "get away with" what others would be punished for. Both he and Van were equipped with less than average intelligence, which probably means that they were ruled by their emotions—the desire of the moment, the

predominant fear—more than is the average boy. Stealing in a child of nine, even more if possible in one of eight—Don's mental age when he was examined at the clinic—is by most students of child life felt to call for patient, persistent education in an appreciation of property rights rather than for beatings and threats of imprisonment.

We have here, in one family, clear-cut illustrations of the leading types of reaction to the domineering father: where one child is able to withstand the pressure and hold his own, learning self-command and attaining a degree of maturity in the process, another may be terrorized into submission and dependence, and a third driven to rebellion and lawlessness. Yet even the one who apparently makes the best adjustment may carry over into adulthood a habit of reacting to every interference with anger—an anger controlled under the threat of superior force, indeed, but liable to break out when inferiors are dealt with. And so long as the theory of "spare the rod and spoil the child" is accepted, he can count upon one group of inferiors—his children—upon whom he may vent his anger in the sacred name of discipline.

That Mr. Osborn was himself the product of a disciplinary system of this sort was made clear by him in one interview: an interview so revealing from several points of view that we offer the following quotation from it. He is speaking of Don:

I'm through with the whole business. I'll give that boy just one more chance. Next time he can go to jail. I simply won't have the family disgraced by a thief and a liar. I've licked him and talked myself hoarse, and if that doesn't work he knows what will. My father licked me and my brothers a whole lot harder than I ever licked Don. We knew we had to mind and we did, and we didn't go crying around about it; we gritted our teeth and took it, and none of us ever disgraced him. I'm glad to work day and night for these kids but not for a thief. I worked across from the penitentiary for years, and I know what happens to boys who steal. They say their parents are to blame. Well, I'm not going to let them say

that about me if I can help it. . . . When I see things in the paper I tell them about it and try to show them what will happen. The wife goes around praying with Don. But we'll see now. I'm through, and the next time he can go to jail.

A generation ago such a statement from a father might possibly have been accepted as the expression of a well-reasoned determination to do his duty by his son. Today the veriest tyro in psychological matters will recognize how small a part reason plays in that determination. The boy who gritted his teeth as he took his father's beatings, and never disgraced him, has become a man so dominated by anger, so obsessed by the sense of his own virtue and the respectability of his family, that he is ready to wash his hands of all responsibility for his nine-year-old son and ship him off to jail and whatever may follow in the way of a criminal career. This impression of the man's personality is supported not only by the remarks quoted but by the whole tenor of his behavior during the period he was known to the clinic. The portrait of him as a "man of wrath" is completed by the comment of his much-repressed eldest son Van:

My father ain't for pleasure. He won't let any of us have parties and wants us to be quiet as soon as he comes home. He is a very stern man—he's not like other fathers, he never sits down and tells us stories. The only time he ever speaks to us is when he tells us to do something or beats us for something we have done.

One point in Mr. Osborn's statement is of special interest. This father is evidently a reader of the newspapers; he knows how commonly published statements from apparently authoritative sources insist that a bad boy's parents are to blame for his misdeeds in that they have failed to give him proper moral and religious training, and he feels that he can prove himself guiltless of this accusation by citing the beatings and lectures and warnings he has administered. Is he,

in point of fact, from the standpoint of those who make such statements, far wrong? To many of us it has become evident that whipping and moralizing and dwelling on the horrible consequences of misbehavior are not the most effective methods of putting a stop to it; but the utterances of not a few judges and other prominent persons are open to the interpretation that a father is doing his full duty if he employs these ancient and time-honored corrective measures. Neither Mr. Osborn nor the more eminent persons whose public advice he heeds have yet grasped the concept that, in the child or the man who commits a misdeed, there is something that is worth trying to understand, and that only through understanding can we hope to arrive at a wise solution of his difficulties.

Closely related to domination of children by parents is domination by older brothers and sisters.

Andrew Hally's father was a skilled craftsman whose habits were said to be "regular except when drinking." At all times selfish, unreasonable, domineering, and violent-tempered, he was quite out of his mind when in liquor, would beat his wife and throw anything he could lay hands on. His eldest son was, from the parental standpoint, a model boy—had attended school regularly, now worked regularly, had never given any trouble. Andrew, on the other hand, scorning the virtuous example constantly held up to him, played truant, went with a tough gang, and had been involved in several stealing affairs. He was bright, but disliked school, apparently carrying over into it a resentful attitude acquired in the home. He was ready enough to admit that he went with bad companions but blamed his father and brother for his misdeeds. His father locked him in for long periods after his various escapades, after which

periods of confinement he would have worse outbreaks; his brother had never treated him fairly, refused to be seen on the street with him, and was at all times his most destructive critic. Andrew was anxious to leave school and go to work, but a physical examination was a necessary step in the procedure of getting a work-permit, and unfortunately his father and brother had insisted upon this until he refused to submit to it. The boy's apparent indifference to his father's drinking and his intense feeling about his brother's overbearing ways were in striking contrast.

Though fifteen-year-old Sophie Ebbing's mother was much irritated by her youngest daughter and wanted her out of the house, it was the girl's two older sisters who were harshest in their attitude toward her: they were determined to send her to an institution for incorrigibles. That they were exasperated with Sophie is not surprising, since she had been expelled from three boarding schools because she wouldn't work, wrote silly notes to boys, and discussed sex affairs with the other girls; but there was no evidence that she had done anything that would make her a fit subject for a correctional school. The home, recently broken up, had been a most unhappy one, with an "impossible" father who made life miserable for all; Sophie declared that she feared him and disliked both her sisters and her mother. With such a loveless background it was hardly surprising that this mature-appearing adolescent should have set her heart upon the first youth who was attentive to her. That the sisters had been equally unhappy was apparent even though they never gave their full confidence to the clinic workers. One of them was finally brought to see that her own repressions were making her unduly hard on Sophie, and promised to abandon the plan of sending her to a reformatory.

Such assumption of domineering attitudes on the part of older brothers and sisters is doubtless due to different causes in different instances. In these two cases there appears to be a close association between overbearing attitudes on the part of children and similar attitudes in parents: in the first, the favorite domineers over the disapproved-of child; in the other, older children who have been embittered by harsh treatment are harsh in their turn. Whether the sons and daughters of kind, just parents ever behave with such bitter unkindness either toward younger brothers and sisters or toward their own children we do not know. The tendency to dominate others, common to all human beings, though often neutralized by opposing tendencies, is regarded by some psychologists as innate; but that life experiences greatly influence its development few will doubt. So far as our limited observation goes, the experience which most intensifies this tendency is the experience of being dominated.

CHAPTER VI

FAVORITISMS, ANTAGONISMS, AND
JEALOUSIES AS RELATED TO
PARENTAL SATISFACTIONS
AND DISSATISFACTIONS

Man, forsooth, prides himself on his consciousness! We boast that we differ from the winds and waves and falling stones and plants, which grow they know not why, and from the wandering creatures which go up and down after their prey, as we are pleased to say, without the help of reason. We know so well what we are doing ourselves and why we do it, do we not? I fancy that there is some truth in the view which is being put forward nowadays, that it is our less conscious thoughts and our less conscious actions which mainly mould our lives and the lives of those who spring from us.

SAMUEL BUTLER,
The Way of all Flesh (written 1873-1885).

ATTENTION has thus far been concentrated, in the main, upon the relation between a parent and a child; only occasionally have the relationships between the children of a family been brought into the picture. Yet it is evident enough that where a father or mother is especially devoted to one youngster, or especially disappointed in and embittered against him, the others are seldom unaware of the fact or unaffected by it. This awareness and its effects have implications that are worth discussing.

The use of the term "awareness" in this connection is perhaps misleading in that it may seem to imply that each member of the family group is fully conscious of the effect upon himself of the especially close or especially antagonistic relations between other members. In point of fact, with

both parents and children the awareness of such a relationship may be hardly more than an obscure feeling never formulated in words, and may be unaccompanied by any realization of how the self is being affected. The father or mother who shows obvious favoritism for one child frequently denies that he feels any preference, or is sure that, whatever he may feel, he does not show it. With equal emphasis he often denies the existence of jealousy between children whose behavior appears to admit of no other construction, while similar denial of obvious feelings may come from the children themselves. These various denials sometimes appear to be deliberate efforts to bluff an interlocutor into belief in a family solidarity which does not exist; again they seem due to an actual confusion arising out of conflicting and supposedly incompatible emotions.

An illustration will perhaps make this point clearer. Eight-year-old Florence Vail, her mother insisted, could not be jealous of her three-year-old brother; she loved him dearly. As for herself, of course she was devoted to both children, but she had to manage Florence through fear, while Oswald responded to praise and kindness as his sister did not.

That love for a brother or sister and jealousy based on another's preference for him or her can both be felt, alternately or simultaneously, would seem too obvious to need statement did we not so often meet with parents who fail to realize that this is possible. If love exists at all, these parents seem to think, it must be complete and all-powerful, ruling out conflicting emotions. On the contrary, a sawing back and forth between such opposite feelings as love and hate has been shown by students of psychology to be characteristic of the emotional life of children and of many adults, especially within the home circle where rivalries are likely to be keener and all feelings more intense.

Less easily explained is the situation between parent and children in the case referred to. Observation of Mrs. Vail and her son and daughter¹ showed clearly that whereas she was constantly and harshly critical of the girl, nagging her endlessly and pushing her unmercifully in her school work, she was softly indulgent toward the boy. Florence's faults seemed to stand out, to the mother, with appalling distinctness, while so far as could be judged she found no fault at all in Oswald—who to the physician appeared as spoiled a youngster as he had encountered. Whether the woman had ever attempted to manage her daughter with the "praise and kindness" so freely bestowed upon her son we do not know, but certainly there were few traces of such methods in her present handling of the girl. Unhappy in childhood, unhappy in her married life, this mother in her attitude toward the one child seemed to express the bitterness and pain and anger accumulated through the years, while upon the other her unsatisfied love-longing poured itself out. In the chaos of her emotional life it was perhaps not strange that she should believe that differences in the natures of the children accounted entirely for her contrasted handling of them.

Such blindness on a parent's part is to be found, as well, in comparatively stable homes—for example, in that of Mr. and Mrs. Minor, who boasted of the perfect union they had made and seemed, in fact, a devoted couple. The mother, while admitting that her husband preferred their eight-year-old son to their twelve-year-old daughter, declared that she herself was equally fond of both children. "But," remarked the first clinic visitor to the home in reporting this statement, "the way her face lights up when Bert enters, the way she waits on him, speaks volumes." Long acquaintance

¹See page 48 for previous discussion of this family's situation.

with the family proved the acuteness of this first observation: toward Dora the mother was prevailingly severe and repressive, toward Bert prevailingly mild and indulgent. Like Mrs. Vail, she seemed conscious only of her daughter's faults, of her son's charms and virtues.

Is it to be supposed that a sister could remain unaware of such favoritism, or that, being aware, she could be indifferent to it? Dora Minor was as ready with disclaimers as her mother: she was not jealous of Bert—she loved babies and had been glad when he came, but he wouldn't take directions from her, and he made trouble for her with her mother; in any scrap, whichever of the two began it, it was always she that got punished. Thus the child voiced a deep-lying discontent and sense of injustice in which many of her difficulties outside the home seemed to be rooted.

Does jealousy toward a brother or sister always rest upon a basis of favoritism on the part of a parent?

If we were to accept our handful of clinic cases as representative of those involving similar emotions we might be doubtful of our answer; wider experience justifies a "no." Yet this much we can say: in every jealousy situation studied the child who believes that his brother or sister is preferred to him has grounds for his belief which cannot lightly be dismissed.

Liability to error on the child's part is perhaps greatest with the small first son or daughter whose case against the interloping second we have already briefly considered. That there are parents who actually, animal-fashion, transfer most of their love to the latest-comer cannot be denied; Mrs. Kohlman in "An Ex-Favorite"¹ will serve as an example. Probably, however, in most cases of infantile jealousy it is

¹ See page 141.

the form of expression of love toward an older child, rather than the love itself, which changes when a new baby arrives. Failure on the parents' part to realize the danger and plan how to meet it thus seems largely responsible; failure to utilize the long months during which they have known that a rival was coming—not to speak of the longer months since the birth of the older child—in preparing that child for the changed situation. By "preparation" we do not here mean merely the talk of a prospective brother or sister which aims to arouse interest and pride in possession, important as this is; we would include too the whole process of gradually discontinuing services suited only to infancy, of gradually diminishing the petting and fondling hitherto given, of encouraging independence by continually setting new goals and by praising for each new achievement until the pride and pleasure felt in this praise and in the growing prowess it celebrates insensibly takes the place of the infantile satisfactions that are being relinquished. If such a course of training for big-sisterhood or big-brotherhood has been carried on in any of the families in our selected group, the parents have failed to bring the fact to the knowledge of their friends at the clinic.

The child's feeling that he has been displaced in his parents' affections by a younger child, though commonest in the preschool years, may persist for years after, especially where parents continue in their failure to realize how their attitudes are being misinterpreted, and where they are childishly impulsive and ill-balanced in their management. Thus Ted Curtis at eight cherished an intense dislike for the five-year-old sister whom he believed to be his mother's favorite. The little girl was in fact brighter than he, and had given the mother much less trouble; but though Mrs. Curtis constantly compared the children in an ill-judged effort to im-

prove her son's scholarship and behavior, she actually, by her own admission, loved him better. This, Ted had no means of knowing; for the mother, unsatisfied in her marital relations, was undemonstrative toward both husband and children while her unutilized emotions overflowed in violent, unreasoning outbursts of rage. Since the father's preference for his daughter was evident, the boy felt himself isolated and his unhappiness expressed itself in truancy and in long wanderings from home in the course of which he had more than once stolen.

As soon as a child's feeling that he is displaced and unwanted drives him either to such definite misconduct or to the restlessness and efforts to attract attention by minor misbehavior at home or in school which are commoner expressions of unhappiness, increased severity on the part of his parents usually accentuates the original difficulty. From this point on, the misunderstanding is likely to deepen until what was at first, perhaps, mere inattention on the parents' part due to absorption in the fascinations of a new baby develops into irritation and actual dislike.

Such apparently had been the course of events in the life of eleven-year-old Simon Novala, whose home and school difficulties centered in his absorption in the misery of feeling himself disliked by his father and the younger brother who had usurped his place. His brother "told on" him all the time, Simon said, and his father beat him for things he over-looked in his brother; his father liked his brother much better—Simon didn't know why. Simon had tried in every possible way to win their favor—had bought cigars for his father and had treated his brother to movies and ice cream; but nothing he did made any difference. He said sadly that he couldn't figure it out, he had tried so hard to make them like him and still they didn't seem to like him at all. He

did a lot of day-dreaming, always in these fantasies occupying the supreme position he had lost.

In this case there was, to be sure, if the mother's interpretation of the family drama is to be trusted, an added complication. Her husband had always, she said, been intensely jealous of any man in whom she showed the least interest, and she believed he was jealous of Simon and that this jealousy greatly intensified his antagonism to the boy. Similarly we find another mother interpreting her husband's violent antipathy for their small daughter as due to jealousy; he had not wanted the child, and the realization that his wife loved the little girl better than she did him heightened his irritation against her until the mother feared he would seriously injure the child.

Curious twists and turns of childish jealousy also appear in families where lack of love between parents has led to separation. In one case where separated parents have reunited for the sake of the children we find both the ten-year-old boy and the eight-year-old girl cherishing a strong dislike for the father. This feeling, perhaps interpretable partly as jealousy at having to share the mother with the father, certainly reflects many criticisms of the father overheard by the children during the years of separation. The maternal relatives with whom mother and children had lived had made a great deal of the girl, but had heartily disapproved of the boy, in whom they traced a strong resemblance to his father. To the father, on the other hand, the oft-reported fact of this same resemblance had especially endeared the boy; but the youngster at home expressed the wish that he were not the father's favorite, and at the clinic carried his objection one step further by denying the existence of any such favoritism on his father's part. Curiously enough, the boy was said never to have

shown jealousy of his sister during the years when she was the reigning favorite in the grandparents' home, though he had developed a sense of inferiority that markedly warped his personality. The sister, however, though "bored" and "disgusted" with the father, was inclined to be jealous of her brother. In this tangled skein of relationships much remains obscure.

In most of the cases thus far discussed in this section it is the non-favorite in a family whose unfortunate behavior has brought him to the clinic as a patient; the favorite in the same family, though soon seen to be quite as grave a potential problem, has not yet forced his parents to envisage him as such. Favoritism for one child rather than antagonism to the other has thus been, actually, the primary difficulty in most of these families. There are, however, cases in which an antipathy toward a child has been manifested by a parent since birth or early infancy, and may thus be considered a primary phenomenon, even when other children in the family are preferred. We offer two instances in illustration.

One attractive little boy of six was brought for study because he was difficult to manage, suffered from alarming night terrors, was suspected of masturbation, and was, his parents feared, subnormal mentally. Inquiry brought to light the fact that he had been from birth in the care of nurses, owing to the fact that his mother, who had experienced a "nervous breakdown" shortly before, had refused to care for him or even to see him until he was six months old, and had ever since showed a marked dislike for him. As most of his nurses had been young and incompetent, this sorely deprived youngster had also been badly spoiled by impulsive, inconsistent handling; he had not learned to do any of the things for himself which should have become habits in a child of his years, and had no notion of how to

get on with other children—the only other child in the family being twice his age.

Just what was the root of the difficulty in this case is not known. The marriage had indeed been an arranged one, in which the husband loved the wife while she remained cold toward him; but she loved her first son. A natural surmise is that the second had been an unwanted child; yet many an unwanted child is after his arrival dearly loved.

That Karl Gruber was an unwanted child there could be no manner of doubt; during her pregnancy with him, Mrs. Gruber admitted, she had made many attempts at abortion, and after his birth she had refused to nurse him or to care for him at night, letting him scream until in desperation his father would fetch him his bottle. Naturally, with such a start the baby had developed into a cross, cranky child who seemed to delight in doing the exact opposite of what his mother wanted him to do. At seven, for example, though he had long since acquired bladder control, he was still soiling his clothing almost daily, a habit which threw Mrs. Gruber into spasms of rage in which she described herself as "half-crazed."

Along with much other offensive conduct, this habit seemed to the clinic to constitute a definite program of revenge on the boy's part: his mother, who had sown the wind, was now reaping the whirlwind. This theory seems borne out by the fact that during a period of six weeks in which the mother was persuaded to try out a better plan of management, substituting encouragement and praise for revilings and abuse, the soiling as well as much of the boy's other misbehavior entirely ceased—to return when the mother relapsed, and again to cease when she renewed her efforts.

What caused this relapse—what lay behind the long history of mismanagement of the child from infancy on? To answer this question would involve the telling of a far longer tale in which the mother's own childhood in a home where violent tempers ruled perhaps furnishes the keynote, while fear of a large family with accompanying clumsy efforts at birth control plays a leading rôle. But even the highly detailed history of this case fails to explain why one child alone became the object of the mother's antipathy, while toward his older sister and younger brother her attitude was approximately normal.

In yet another family a child much desired by his mother had been warmly welcomed; but his constant crying had soon begun to irritate the scholarly father, with whose plans of work it interfered, and his resistance to breast feeding, interpreted by the parents as due to inborn obstinacy, was fastened upon by them as constituting a point of resemblance to a detested grandparent. This identification, made before the child was six months old, seemed to hang over him from then on like a nemesis; every fault that appeared in him was regarded as confirmation of it; and before he had reached the age of ten his parents had decided that he was destined to become an egotistical, obstinate, impractical dreamer like the old man. His good traits—and he had a number—counted for nothing against the emotional storm which the supposed fatal resemblance had brought down upon him. When a little sister, possessed of all the charms and virtues he lacked, made a late appearance upon the family stage, the place she took could hardly be said to be any longer his.

In these last three illustrations we have strayed back to situations in which a direct relation between parent and child

furnishes the main theme. A conspicuous parental antipathy for one child may—indeed, one would almost hazard, must—more or less affect the other children in a family; but how? None of the brothers or sisters in these families were studied by the clinic; did any of them, like Simon Novala's brother, act as informant against the despised youngster or otherwise use the parental disapproval to further personal ends? Did any of them sympathize with and seek to aid the under dog? We have no evidence.

Before concluding this chapter, we should like to offer an account of one situation involving two brothers, ten and thirteen years old respectively, in which an especially intense jealousy was felt by each for the other. The background of these boys would, by any standard of objective judgment known to us, be considered a good one, in that the parents were intelligent, fairly well educated, and deeply religious, maintained harmonious relations between themselves, provided a comfortable home, and were devoted to both boys. The antagonism between the boys seems to have been a product of slow growth, fed by many influences, some of them far from obvious. For this reason, and because the situation might so readily on first appearances have been entirely misjudged, a somewhat fuller summary than usual is offered which in part follows the historical sequence of events after the clinic became acquainted with the family.

Harry Hegeman, the younger boy, was first referred. He had been playing truant and indulging in temper tantrums, was quite unmanageable at home, where he loudly declared that he wouldn't go to school unless he chose. At school he had missed his last promotion and was considered not very bright; his teacher said he was sneaky, behaved himself when she was present, but talked when she was out of the

room. At the clinic he appeared an attractive, likable youngster. Psychological testing indicated that he was exceptionally bright, with a mental age three years beyond his life age and a vocabulary a year beyond that.

Harry's chief complaint was that his brother Frederick was his mother's pet and was allowed to do things *he* wasn't permitted to do. This had been the situation as far back as Harry could remember, but during the past few months it had become much more pronounced. Frederick, who had been growing rapidly, had suddenly begun to complain of various vague aches and pains, of a sense of impending danger; his parents had taken him to various physicians who had found nothing wrong with him physically, but he had continued to complain, resorting to tears, until, much worried, they had let him stay home from school and had formed the habit of giving him pretty much anything he asked for. Harry was convinced that Frederick was playing upon the parents' sympathies, and felt himself much neglected in comparison. His father, he felt, liked him better than his mother did, but his father as well as his mother had recently favored Frederick.

School difficulties, in Harry's view, were secondary to home difficulties. He didn't like his teacher and felt she wasn't fair to him; but when closely questioned he admitted that what he was really doing was to carry over to the teacher his feeling against his mother based on what he felt was her injustice toward him. If he were happier at home he'd be happier at school; the unkindness of his parents was the real source of trouble. He had next to no toys, and he hadn't yet recovered from his disappointment when, instead of receiving the sled and skates he had hoped for at Christmas, he had been told he was half-owner of a boys' encyclopedia that his brother had asked for.

Most interesting is the contrast between the first report of Frederick's attitude toward Harry and what later proved to be the true state of the older brother's feeling toward the younger. Seen about the time Harry was referred, Frederick gave the clinic visitor to understand that he had a friendly feeling for his brother and that the boy's jealousy of him was unwarranted. A few months later, when he himself had been referred as a patient by his father, he frankly said he thought he was the favorite, that both parents had spoiled him; and every further step in acquaintance with him brought additional evidence of his intense jealousy of Harry and antagonism to him.

This jealousy had been first manifested, the mother reported, when Frederick had endeavored to scratch the face of his new-born rival. After a time it had seemed to subside, reappearing in extreme form only a few months before the clinic came into the case. Had the older boy at this point begun to realize the mental superiority of the younger? The psychological findings of the clinic indicated that Frederick was, in fact, an extremely dull boy, his mental age being considerably lower than that of his junior. He had applied himself so conscientiously to his lessons, in contrast to Harry's scatter-brained performances, that at school he had until recently made a better record. His parents had, however, begun to realize his inferiority, and the same realization had been forcing itself upon his unwilling consciousness, especially since he entered junior high school. Quarreling, usually incited by Frederick, had become constant between the two boys.

What justification was there in fact for the conviction cherished by both of them that Frederick was the mother's favorite?

Questioned on this point, Mrs. Hegeman stated that

whereas she had cared for Frederick during his entire babyhood, nursing him until he was more than a year old, she had been separated from Harry during a large part of his infancy by illness which forced her into a hospital. During this time the baby had been cared for by his father, and when she returned home he had not recognized her, and for some time had been afraid of her. She felt he had never loved her as Frederick did; and though she hesitated to admit the fact, it was evident enough that he had never held quite the same place in her heart as the older boy. Mr. Hegeman, on the other hand, freely admitted that he preferred Harry, who he felt was like himself while Frederick resembled his wife. He had thought he had concealed his favoritism—had, indeed, when Frederick became ill and Harry grew obstreperous, ignored the younger boy as a disciplinary measure while he showed great concern for the elder. Both parents were, however, as already stated, devoted to both boys. Their preferences had apparently never been made grossly evident; yet that both boys were aware of them had already been learned.

Within the limitations set by our scheme of discussion it is, of course, impossible to trace out all the tangled threads that were found to enter into this fabric of family relationships. Confining ourselves, as we have tried to do, to the topic of the antagonism between the boys, it seems fairly evident that while the original basis of this feeling was laid in their early years when Frederick had to resign his position at center stage to the new baby, and while it was added to as Harry came to feel that Frederick was preferred by the mother, other elements entered in when Frederick was forced to recognize his younger brother's intellectual superiority and his parents' realization of the fact, and when Harry felt himself deserted even by his father. As the two boys were repeatedly seen, it became increasingly evident

that Frederick's feeling was being intensified by his hopeless struggle to maintain his supremacy as the elder son. His hatred rose to overt expression in a fight reported by the mother, when, after bruising Harry badly about the head with a piece of lead pipe, he remarked, "I wish I'd killed him." Yet later, after the parents had made a real effort to convince the boys that they were equally loved, and after activities outside the home had been found which kept them apart more than formerly, the trouble between them appeared to subside.

The case records referred to in the chapters thus far are significant for the evidence they offer as to how far normal love-relationships within the family circle can be replaced by relationships in which overdevotion, favoritism, antagonism, and jealousy appear to dominate, while yet the family holds together and presents an aspect of normality. In only two of the families discussed had there at any time been, so far as our evidence shows, a breach involving separation between the parents; in a number of them there was real devotion and congeniality.

What, briefly, are the elements which seem to play a major part in producing the exaggerated devotions, favoritisms, antagonisms, and jealousies studied?

So far as we can see, the beginnings of those special devotions which, when there is more than one child, become favoritisms, can usually be traced to the charm of appealing babyhood and the other factors that enter into the early spoiling process. As the child becomes a special source of pride or, through some resemblance, is identified by the parent with himself or with an especially beloved person, they take more definite form; but apparently they rise to their greatest and most destructive intensity only in parents who

are otherwise balked in finding an outlet for their emotions. This would seem to suggest that the children of a truly happy marriage in which there is complete mutual devotion are not likely to be subjected to the more extreme forms of parental favoritism. The small son of an unhappy couple often receives the fanatical devotion of a mother; the small daughter, that of a father.

An antagonism may, seemingly, have its origin in unwilling acceptance of a child's coming and in the irritation caused by the demands of an unwanted baby. A child who persistently disappoints a parent's ideals and ambitions and hurts his pride, who does not give what the parent considers a due return on the investment made in him, may also become an object of dislike, as may one who constantly reminds his father or mother of some detested relative. Any other irritation, disappointment, or distress, old or new, from causes within or without the family circle, may add to the tension which finds release in the parent's dealings with a child who has antagonized him, thus leading to harsh, dominating, repressive treatment.

Finally, jealousy and antagonism between children may originate in the early displacement of one child by the coming of another, or in the conviction of one child that another, older or younger, is preferred—by the parents, first of all, to a lesser degree by others. Such a feeling may be tremendously intensified by a consciousness of inferiority to the preferred child.

In what has been written it has never been the intention to imply that where antagonism, jealousy, dislike, or even hatred exists, there love is necessarily absent. Psychiatrists tell us of numerous patients who are conscious only of love for members of their families, yet who actually, far below the surface, are cherishing intense antipathies for these same

individuals. Conversely, there is many a case where antagonism seems the predominant factor in consciousness, yet where, underneath it, love still has a powerful hold. Probably more often than not, in children and in adults whose emotional life has failed to achieve full maturity, antipathy and sympathy, liking and disliking, love and hate, alternately assume control of the forces that find expression in daily acts and words—an oscillating emotional state technically known as ambivalence. Since love is assumed to exist between parents and children and between brothers and sisters, apparent striking exceptions to this rule are often brought to the attention of individuals and organizations that aim to straighten out disordered emotions; but no one, perhaps—certainly no one who has not profoundly studied his patient—would ever be safe in assuming that deep down below the surface manifestations of even the most intense hate there may not lie a love that is capable of rising to emergencies and overruling all the destructive, narrowly personal constituents in the individual's attitude. Faced with the individual who is sure he is a completely devoted parent or child or brother or sister, and that all difficulties between himself and the other are the other's fault, the worker in this field may find the path to a better relationship blocked till a realization of the forces fighting against love within the individual can be brought about. When, on the other hand, antagonism is uppermost, the problem may become one of searching out and bringing to the surface the uniting forces of love. In either case there is need of clearer insight into the conflicting impulses which, to a greater or less degree, are at work in all of us. To minimize such conflict in children—to guide them so that love, the great constructive force in life, may grow to full strength unhampered by the destructive forces of hate—is one of the supreme tasks of the parent and of his aids in school and community.

PART II

MISTAKEN IDEAS WHICH INFLUENCE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

The doctor who devotes himself exclusively to children, and so comes to regard adults solely as the parents, nurses, or teachers of his little patients, eventually finds himself in rather an unenviable situation. On the one hand, he has gradually, and at long last, come to learn something (albeit so painfully little!) about the manner of thinking of his small charges. On the other hand, he realizes how appallingly ignorant most parents are of the ways of thinking and feeling of their own children. . . . Most discouraging of all, he finds in the vast majority of instances that such adults are hopelessly ignorant of the fact of their own ignorance!

FRANK HOWARD RICHARDSON, M.D.,
Parenthood and the Newer Psychology.

CHAPTER VII

IDEAS REGARDING CHILD NATURE

EVIDENCES that the parents of children studied in the clinics held definitely formulated views regarding child nature are few; but in the management of their children many parents were clearly following disciplinary systems associated with certain theories or conceptions of child nature which perhaps they had never heard of. When, for example, a father lays great emphasis on instant obedience and the drill which secures it from his child, when he uses reward and punishment freely in the effort to establish fixed habits of response in the youngster, he may never have reflected that he is employing methods commonly used with colts and puppies, still less that he is being influenced by a school of psychology which has been largely engaged in the study of animals. Or, again, when a parent hedges his child around with innumerable prohibitions to action, he has very likely never reflected that he is making use of a system of taboos similar in principle to those which govern the lives of savages. Even though he may refer to his son as a "young whelp" or a "young savage" he is probably far from realizing the closeness of the parallel between his methods and those used to control beasts and primitive human beings.

That principles of value in the management of children have been discovered through study of habit formation in animals is incontrovertible. However, there is always the danger that training based exclusively on these principles may, as Dr. Glueck puts it, "force the energy expressions of the developing individual into definite and rigidly delimited

channels. Drill, no matter how scientific it may be, carries the evil of depriving the child of opportunity for spontaneous and unhampered development. Habit leads to mastery but it also enslaves, and human adaptation demands plasticity as well as stability." As to the merits of reward and punishment as incentives to the formation of good habits, "it should not be forgotten in this connection that a very important goal of development is the acquisition of the capacity for making the right decision even though it is contrary to the rule of immediate reward and punishment. One of the important characteristics of healthy adulthood is the ability to postpone the satisfaction of desire to an ever-receding future."¹

Similarly, overemphasis on the resemblance between savagery and childhood involves danger. "It is true that in the course of the organization of his instinctive life . . . the impulses of the child are in many respects similar to those of the savage. But if we carry the analogy too far, and act upon it by enslaving the child in a system of taboos and prohibitions and threats of dire consequences, we may, perhaps, be accentuating the inevitable disposition to feelings of guilt and unconscious needs for punishment."¹

A third unfortunate attitude toward childhood results from seeing the child as "merely a small adult to be judged respecting his transgressions and shortcomings by adult standards."¹ We have mentioned a number of examples of this view in illustrating parents' attempts to gain satisfaction through realizing their own cherished ideals in a child. Young mothers and fathers who have had little or no experience with children and who are not well read in child psychology naturally have little conception of the developments

¹ Bernard Glueck, M.D.: Concerning Parental Attitudes, *Child Study*, March, 1927.

to be expected at different ages or of the degree of independence and self-control that may reasonably be looked for, let us say, at eighteen months or two years or four years. While often they expect too little of the child, continuing to do all sorts of things for him when he should be doing them for himself, they not infrequently expect too much. As a friend of the mother of one three-year-old girl put it, "Mrs. Guest wants Gwinie to be eighteen years old." Again and again the clinic worker comments that the parents of a four- or a six- or an eight-year-old seem to expect an almost adult conception of ethics or of manners on his part; they assume that he, like themselves, should be able to defer rewards and find satisfaction in working for a far distant future. Occasionally we find his elders placing responsibilities for handling money upon a small boy in complete ignorance of the fact that honesty rests upon a conception of property rights which is, in most children, a plant of slow growth. A boy of eleven remarked at the clinic that he "really never knew stealing wasn't right till lately."

In the case of one such child the manner in which his grandparents turned upon him after the commission of a first offense, hounding him by references to the episode and rousing in him the impression that they regarded him as foredoomed to an evil life, apparently had much to do with his subsequent stealing. Errors of the opposite type met with from time to time, as where the grandfather of a four-year-old acclaimed his "cuteness" when he climbed up on a sideboard and took money, are hardly more serious.

Parents who burden small children with confidences regarding their own worries would also seem to be acting upon the assumption that the youngsters are capable of understanding and reacting like adults. More than one child of under ten we have thus found playing the part of confidant

to a distracted mother. Such a child, the eight-year-old son of a separated couple, one day when his mother took him to his father's office for a visit, observed that the father patted the mother's hand. Later he asked her, "Mother, why didn't you do the way they do in the movies, and ask him to come home? You lost a golden opportunity." The mother then "explained why she couldn't," and "thought he understood." When one reviews the grounds of separation, dating back to before the child's birth, one wonders—wonders first how much he actually did understand, and second what the effect upon him of that understanding may have been. Another youngster of two-and-a-half, son of a chronic deserter, greeted a visitor to the home one day with the announcement, "Bad daddy all dawn." At four he had learned to elaborate the theme: "Daddy is a bad man, he fights, says bad words. He's in pizon 'tause he didn't s'port us. When he tums out of pizon he may dill us, mother and baby and me. Mother said so." Here tragedy and comedy meet in baby-talk. A mother in such distress of mind as this one is surely to be more pitied than blamed—but what sort of distorted view of life is she helping her small son to acquire?

Another point on which we often find a child's relatives conspicuously failing to understand him is with regard to his sensitiveness. Apparently it is a common conviction of parents and other adults that children who feel keenly their own sinfulness or the disapprobation of their elders show contrition by tears and promises to do better, and that those who exhibit no such signs are as unconcerned as they seem. For example, the parents of a nine-year-old boy do not feel that he is sensitive about his bed-wetting, "because he assumes an indifferent manner when the subject is mentioned." Or, again, the family of a fifteen-year-old "cannot

reconcile any idea of his feeling inferior to other boys with his 'sarcastic' talk." A boy of thirteen who has failed several times in school tells the psychiatrist that he "never says anything about this but he thinks a lot about it." That a child—or an adult—may cloak his real feelings under a sullen or an expressionless exterior, or that he may endeavor to hide what he really feels by acting as though inspired by exactly the opposite feeling, is a well-established fact the knowledge of which is by no means confined to students of psychology; novelists and playwrights have long been making use of it. The difficulty in recognizing the working of such familiar behavior mechanisms in one's own closest of kin may seem hard to explain. Probably the clouding of judgment by irritation and a sense of shame accounts for much of it.

Closely related is the notion, cherished by many adults, that childhood is a period of almost unadulterated happiness. Because the cares and responsibilities of adulthood are still far in the future, it is assumed that the child is care-free. Doubtless sometimes he is, but our clinic records bear witness that frequently his whole life is overcast by worries of which his parents are completely unaware. Fathers and mothers have a curious way of assuming that because a child is theirs they must surely understand the workings of his mind. He never speaks of this or that—therefore he doesn't think about it! This is to be simple-minded indeed, as hosts of adults who have dragged to the light memories of childish fears and anxieties and rancors can testify. Occasionally the mother of some clinic patient comes to a realization of her ignorance regarding the youngster's inner life while searching her memory in the effort to provide data regarding his developmental history. Mrs. Cort, for example, who had apparently never given a thought to her

daughter's emotional life, during the history-taking remarked, "Isn't it strange how little you know about your own children?" Other parents get their first inkling of what is wrong with a child from the guarded revelations of the psychiatrist who has talked with him. If all mothers and fathers were as ready to acknowledge deficiencies in understanding and as eager for new light upon their problem as are many of these parents who bring their children to clinics, the spread of parent education would be greatly accelerated.

One other misconception of the nature of the child appears still to be widely current despite the many onslaughts made upon it in recent years: the conception, namely, that childhood is a state of complete innocence.

One need only look into the face of a healthy, happy toddler to realize how the impression has arisen. The father who summed up his delight in his baby in the words, "And she doesn't know a single, earthly thing!" probably spoke for hosts of parents in similar circumstances. Like dust-laden tramps who plunge their faces in some cool spring, we turn from our endless struggle with good and evil to refresh ourselves in the simplicity of these newcomers among us, and, spurning the age-old concept of original sin, we hug to ourselves the belief that here at last is utter innocence.

But even as we do so, are we not in fact haunted by that very concept? If we were not more or less obsessed by the belief that certain universal impulses of mankind are in their nature essentially sinful, should we cling so fiercely to the notion that for a few brief years, at least, our children are exempt from the sway of these impulses? If we could conceive of sex as a natural and wholesome as well as an inevitable part of life in youth and adulthood, should we find so insufferable the suggestion that it is already a force in infancy?

The mistaken concept that normal childhood is innocent in the sense of being sexless is dangerous in proportion as adult sexuality is believed to be base and low. Thus our discussion of this concept resolves itself into a discussion of mistaken ideas regarding sex, which are so many and so serious in their effect on children as to demand a chapter to themselves.

CHAPTER VIII

IDEAS REGARDING SEX DEVELOPMENT AND SEX PRACTICES

Parents are fond of creating in their children reverence and respect, and both these qualities make confession a little difficult. The child has been led to believe that his mother is the best woman on earth and that his father is only slightly less sanctified. To such ones he is not likely to bring things which are gross and shameful. He may even be in the state of mind of the man who told me, "When I was ten I knew a whole lot of things which I thought were too wicked for my father or mother ever to have heard about."

HEYWOOD BROWN,
New York World, June 6, 1924.

THE harm which may result from the notion that normal childhood is sexless begins to appear when the parent first has to meet a searching sex question posed by his child, or first learns that the child has witnessed or practised one of the forbidden acts. Unless exceptionally enlightened, the parent then is likely to react in a way that tends to repress any later questions of a similar nature on the child's part. This reaction may be as mild as that of the father who one day found his tiny daughter standing on a chair at the window absorbed in contemplation of two mating animals, and gently turned her about so that she faced the room; it may be as violent as that of the mother who, when her seven-year-old son remarked that he "knew what was wrong with" a pregnant woman, shouted at him, "Shut up and don't let me hear you talk like that again." Harsh or mild, the effect produced is determined perhaps as much by the child's sensitiveness and by all sorts of other circumstances as by

the character of the particular admonition. Thus the tiny girl referred to "understood perfectly," without a word being spoken, that what she had witnessed was never to be referred to, that she must never ask a question about such things, and her whole later life was colored by the understanding; while the boy, some months later, after the pregnant woman had given birth to her child, risked his mother's wrath to remind her, "I told you I knew what was wrong," showing himself quite unrepressed and ribaldly gleeful. Here the error of the first parent is certainly less easy to point out than that of the second. To avoid limiting the spontaneity of shrinkingly sensitive children is an even more difficult task than to teach observance of civilized usages to young hoodlums.

How common repression of sex interest in children is today, how common it was a generation ago, we have no means of accurately determining, since the whole subject is still largely taboo. Whatever other tales of childhood—one's own or another's—one may tell, in most social circles one does not tell the story of sex experience; and until recently, scientifically reliable data on normal sex development have not been accessible to the general public. For these reasons many persons—perhaps most persons—have grown to adulthood under the impression that sex experience of any kind in childhood is a rare and abnormal phenomenon, entailing dire consequences. As these persons have become parents, the amount of harm they have been able to do, with the best intentions in the world, is incalculable.

Physicians are the natural confidants and advisers of parents who are facing problems of sex education or sex habits in their children, and as medical-psychological institutions devoted to the problems of childhood and adolescence, child guidance clinics receive the confidences of many

an anxious father and mother. Some half-dozen representative instances may help to make clear what difficulties parents are facing and what are some of the common errors made in attempting to deal with those difficulties.

Mrs. Grant had come to the clinic to ask if she might bring her daughter, aged three, to be studied there. Alone with the chief social worker, the anxious-eyed young mother seemed barely able to control herself.

"Geraldine is very high-strung, very nervous; she picks her nails, and—and—has other bad habits." Mrs. Grant couldn't seem to get any further.

Gently the social worker drew her out. No, the child wasn't fussy about her food—in fact, always ate all of whatever was served to her. Yes, she wet the bed, and—yes, she masturbated. The mother couldn't bring herself to utter the word, but bent her head in shamed acknowledgment when the worker spoke it. Geraldine had formed the habit a year or so ago, sometimes indulged in it several times a week.

So extreme was the distress and disgust expressed by Mrs. Grant's whole attitude that it was evident she needed help as much as her little girl; since to the well-informed and well-adjusted adult such childish habits are matters for calm consideration rather than causes of emotional upset. So, gently and carefully, the worker explained a little; that many small children had this habit and got over it—at Geraldine's age it was really a minor problem. Studies of young children in many places had proved that before they were five a majority of them had engaged in sex play. With some it happened only occasionally, with others it lasted longer, but with most it was over in a few years and appeared again, if at all, only with adolescence. Physicians who had studied the subject said that the habit, while undesirable,

was by no means the dreadful, injurious thing many of us had been told it was.

Amazement and a dawning hope struggled in Mrs. Grant's face as she listened; and when the worker went on to inquire whether she knew of any special circumstances connected with the beginning of Geraldine's habit, of any special cause for it, the mother burst forth:

"I will tell you the truth. I have believed all along that she inherited the tendency. When I was in my teens I did the same thing for six months or more. Then I came across a book that told about the terrible results of the habit and I stopped it at once. I've never told any one, not even my husband. I've had such a dreadful feeling of guilt all these years! When Geraldine began to do it I thought it was all my fault and was sick with disgust at us both. And now you say it isn't such a terrible thing after all?"

Here was a mother who, though she had been rapidly developing into a harsh, unsympathetic disciplinarian, was evidently quite as much to be pitied as her small daughter.

During the past year she had used every method she could think of in her effort to break up the objectionable habit—had punished, frightened, tied Geraldine's hands, threatened to send her away. In her desperation she had whipped the child "as hard as she could." An antagonism had grown up between the two—it seemed as though Geraldine knew intuitively how she could torment her mother. How much this antagonism may have had to do with the continuance of the habit it is impossible to say.

Though the connection between a parent's early experience and his attitude toward his child is not always so obvious as in Mrs. Grant's case, some connection there probably always is. When Natalie Young's mother warned her daughter, "that part of the body is a sewer, not to be

touched," she was very likely repeating a warning heard in her own youth, and did not at all realize the harm she was doing the child by establishing an association between filth and sex which might spoil her whole outlook on life and even ruin her chances of happiness in marriage. When Irving Vaughn's mother told him he would "go crazy" if he continued the practice of masturbation, she was voicing a belief generally accepted a generation ago but now abandoned by all qualified students of the subject. Probably most of the fathers and mothers of today received such misinformation in their youth; but most of them, too, grew up in a time when reports about "flying machines" were considered as mythical as those about sea-serpents; and the practice they have had in revising their notions in regard to physical science and mechanics should lead them to suspect that there may be need of revising ideas in other fields of knowledge as well.

The stories of two boys will serve to illustrate somewhat more in detail common parental errors in this field and their consequences.

Martin Ferris, nine years old, was said by his parents to have masturbated excessively at night for the past two or three years. He would lie awake sometimes till nearly midnight, feigning sleep while he covertly indulged in sex play. He read and indulged in day-dreams a great deal, was limp and lackadaisical, fabricated wild yarns, and according to his parents was full of fears. At school he was said to be languid, underhanded, untruthful, but lovable nevertheless, and well liked by the other children. He had a good mind, was almost the best reader in his class, but his work in general was not nearly up to his capacity.

The parents' account of their efforts to break up the

boy's habit may be given in their own words. Said the father: "I told him he would go crazy. Whenever we hear of any robberies or murders I tell him that the men who did these things done the same thing when they were little that he does. That is what caused them to get into this trouble, and he will too if he don't quit." (In this connection it is interesting to note that for two years past Martin had shown special interest in scandals, bank robberies, murders and the like; also that he did an immense amount of day-dreaming on subjects unknown, would often sit for an hour doing nothing but stare into space.) The mother said: "We have told his uncle and aunt before him, to try to shame him. I have told him I'd send him away from his baby sister as he wasn't fit to touch her. We told the priest and he talked to him. In January he made his first communion and I thought when he began to go to confession that would help him, but it hasn't."

Threats and shaming had not been the only measures used; Martin had also been whipped, put to bed, deprived of pleasures, made to wear leather mits of his father's manufacture. His parents thought that this last manœuvre had produced results.

As Martin, too, declared that he had recently given up the habit, largely because of what his parents said about his dying or going crazy, it might seem that there was little more for the clinic to do. Such, however, was not its view. The whole matter was talked over with the boy. He had clearly been in a good deal of conflict over his habit and the fears instilled by his parents, which had led him to attribute both his lack of appetite and his poor work in school to its effects. He thought he had been improving since he gave it up. He was encouraged to believe that of course he could conquer the habit, was urged to keep busy and active; and

at the same time an effort was made to relieve the pressure of his fears, since obviously only harm could result from excessive worry.

With Mr. Ferris the whole situation was also thoroughly gone into with the result that he was convinced that he had been completely misinformed. His comment that his own life might have been entirely different had things been explained to him properly showed clearly enough that the misinformation he had been dealing out to Martin dated from his own boyhood.

Our other boy was nearly sixteen when he became known to the clinic. Small and slight for his age, he had more than average intelligence, and had done well in school up to the last two or three years, when his work had begun to fall off. He lived with his father, stepmother, and baby half-sister. Mr. Foster was a well-groomed young business man; his second wife, who had also been in business before her marriage, was said by him to be very particular and exacting—things “had to go just right”—and rather tense, nervous, and worrisome. Both were very religious and inclined to be puritanical in their attitude.

George had been the eldest of three children—the other two having been taken by relatives after their mother's death. The first Mrs. Foster, according to her husband, had been a good mother but unduly lenient—and more lenient with George than with the other children. For example, George had been much indulged as to his eating, permitted to reject such food as he disliked, given special dishes. The grandmother with whom he lived for a time had continued this spoiling process. When he had returned home, four years ago, after his father's remarriage, his first conflict with his stepmother had been over the food issue.

She had insisted that he eat what was set before him, had absolutely refused to indulge him further; and Mr. Foster had backed her in her stand. They felt that George had never quite forgiven them.

It was soon after this eating crisis that Mrs. Foster discovered that George masturbated. She was much disgusted, her husband apparently equally so, since he later told the clinic worker that he did not wish to have any close relationship with his son so long as the habit continued. In addition to this revulsion against the boy, they felt it their duty to warn him of what they believed to be the inevitable consequences which would follow his further indulgence in the habit—insanity and the rest. When he began to bring poor marks home from school, they assured him that these were due to his practices; and for three years past they had continued to attribute every school failure to the same cause. George's acceptance of their statement was shown in school, where after he had received an E in cooperation and effort he was questioned by the principal as to the reason for the falling off in his work. He mentioned his habit, evidently regarding this as a sufficient explanation, and was tremendously surprised that the principal did not appear shocked.

The boy, when examined at the clinic, showed a decided sense of inferiority. Though he did well in the psychological tests, making a score well above the average, he remarked several times, "I'm dumb," or "That shows I'm dumb." While he appeared an attractive and likable boy, it was obvious that he was greatly repressed and was suffering from conflicts regarding his home, his school, and his habits. Once his original barrier of reserve was broken through, however, he talked freely of home conditions—his stepmother's sarcasm and severe discipline, his father's beatings. "He

uses the razor strap on me when he gets mad because—I suppose you know it—I am a masturbator.”

The topic thus opened was thoroughly discussed. George was much worried, felt he had “gone so far he couldn’t cut it out.” He believed such practices led to insanity, and would “ruin him completely.” He had seen a boy whose “head was shaking, tongue sticking out, hands and feet crumpling up”—all, he had been told, because of this habit. It was clear to the physician who interviewed him that the fears instilled were having a very serious effect on George’s mind and work, and he accordingly went into a detailed explanation regarding the causes and consequences of the habit and how it might be overcome. George was immensely interested—nothing had ever been explained to him before. Once, he said, he had refrained from the practice for a time but his parents had refused to believe his statements on the point and in despair he had relapsed. He had asked his father about venereal diseases, but his father had evaded the issue.

That the boy had good stuff in him, and many normal interests which sorely needed encouragement, was evident. He had some artistic talent, was taking drawing lessons, and was keen about baseball. Asked what he most wished for, he said to be good, stop the habit, and get a reputation for being trustworthy. He had felt inadequate, discouraged, rather hopeless, but evidently was much cheered by the interview.

Soon afterwards Mr. and Mrs. Foster were seen together. George, they said, had told them that they had been wrong in taking his masturbation too seriously, and they believed he had “been worse than ever” since his clinic interview. It was pointed out to them that their intense disgust had been entirely natural in view of their own earlier training,

and the complete change in the treatment of such habits was carefully gone into. They were urged to cease attempting to deal with the problem directly, even though temporarily there might seem to be an increase in the boy's practices, since such direct attack would only make matters worse; the part of wisdom was to deal with it indirectly, by making an effort to redirect George's energies along recreational lines, and to remember that he was growing up, that his mind was considerably more developed than his body, that he should be treated less like a child and appealed to through reason rather than domineered over. No marked result attended these efforts to reeducate the parents, but the boy's own attitude greatly improved and with it his school record.

This case brings before us sharply the question of what is to be done when the process of frightening a child into giving up sex habits has on the one hand utterly failed to accomplish its purpose, and on the other has produced a state of depression and discouragement which threatens efficiency and mental health. The opinion of those who have studied the subject most closely is, it must be realized, that where mental collapse follows masturbation it is due not to the physical effects of the habit but to the mental influence of the false ideas inculcated regarding it, or to other disorders of which the masturbation itself may have been a symptom. When brought face to face with the problem of such a frightened child, the only proper solution thus seems to lie in full enlightenment by a thoroughly well-informed person.¹ Where careful explanation is given and the boy or girl receiving it is of good intelligence, the importance of exercising self-restraint and at the same time of cultivating social and athletic interests and living an active, well-

¹ Helpful discussion of this whole subject will be found in *The Mental Hygiene of Childhood* by William A. White, M.D. See especially pages 27-32.

rounded life becomes clear; and a better balanced behavior, with gradual diminution of the habit, should result.

Another type of experience associated with repressive parental attitudes is illustrated by the case of a fifteen-year-old girl. Mary Thomas was far more intelligent than the average, with a vocabulary well above the level usually reached by college-bred adults, though at the time of the examination she was only about halfway through high school. She was small and boyish in figure, appeared young and unsophisticated—a fact which probably accounted in large part for her parents' belief that she was very innocent. On this point their conviction was profound and serene. They had given her no sex information.

These parents were intelligent and fairly well educated; their relations were harmonious, and the home they provided was comfortable. There was one other child, a boy about two years younger than Mary. The parents declared that the two were great friends.

Mary was referred to the clinic by her school because she had taken a purse belonging to another girl. Accused of the theft, she had confessed and made restitution, and had then poured out to the counselor a most amazing stream of confidences which revealed a life quite unknown to and unsuspected by her parents.

At the clinic she repeated and added to her story.

It was a story in which sex curiosity and repression played the leading rôles. Mary dated this curiosity from her second year—the year of her brother's birth. She was frank in expressing her resentment over her mother's babying of him at the present time, and there was little room for doubt that this feeling too had arisen as jealousy when the maternal preference for the baby boy first became apparent.

Her mother's attitude toward sex, probably first shown in connection with the questions almost certain to arise when a small girl observes the differences between herself and a brother, had soon convinced Mary that here was a subject taboo, and she had turned elsewhere in the effort to satisfy her curiosity. There were no confidences, she said, between her and her mother. But on the other hand there was little she had not learned from other sources; she was a walking compendium of information on the sex activities of the children of her city neighborhood; and by a system of spying, carried on in partnership with a group of boys with whom she had been thrown during a summer in the country, she had penetrated most of the mysteries of adult sex behavior as well. Stealing had also been carried on intermittently from an early age, apparently more as a game, for the fun of fooling the storekeepers robbed, than from acquisitive or other common motives; though to this statement the recent theft of a classmate's purse would seem to be an exception, since here the sum of money involved was considerable.

Another feature of the family life, which to a casual observer would have seemed harmless enough, was believed by the clinic to have had an important influence on Mary's development. As already stated, she was a boyish child; while on the other hand her brother was somewhat soft and girlish. Her father, who was devoted to Mary, had repeatedly remarked that Nathan should have been the girl and she the boy. Whatever effect this reiterated observation may have had on the growing child, it is a fact that at fifteen she was much confused as to her own sexual rôle. All her friends, she said, had been boys, she had no girl intimates; she felt she was not like other girls, could never marry. As a matter of fact she was physically a perfectly

normal girl with an unusually good health history. Her attitude toward all the sex doings she reported was, however, curiously aloof, and no evidence that she had ever been a participant in any of them came to light. She had apparently played the part of a detached, amusedly satirical observer, who felt herself to belong to neither sex camp.

With, so far as could be learned, two generations of normal, capable forebears on both sides, there is small basis for supposing that this girl came into the world handicapped by any queer mental twist. Exceptionally intelligent, she was perhaps exceptionally curious; and once set on satisfying her curiosity she proved highly resourceful in her choice of means. Her otherwise normally happy home did not provide the confidential relationship which would have permitted her to unpack her mind of its questions there; while the world outside, peopled by a younger generation who are nothing if not frank, afforded her endless opportunities. Would careful scientific explanations that evaded nothing have satisfied her so that she would not have followed the surreptitious paths along which she amassed her dubious information? We cannot be sure; but certain it is that no polite fictions or half-truths would have served.

Thus we find ourselves launched on the subject of sex education. In reality, nearly everything in this chapter thus far bears upon that subject; but the actual activities of a number of parents in this field, and their verbal responses when the need of such education was urged, seem worth noting.

Fairly common is the handing out of the usual yarns about where babies come from, with variations. Two intelligent youngsters whose mother had told them they came from cabbages reproached her later for misrepresenting the facts. The reaction of the child on learning the truth is not often

so clearly indicated. A dull sister of these two, who had received no instruction, declared she "just couldn't talk things over with her mother." That this feeling was due in part to a sensing of the mother's attitude on sex, as well as to her nagging criticism of the girl for poor progress in school, seems clear.

Other parents, while not opposed to the idea of sex instruction, are unable to give it: one said he felt incompetent to handle the subject, another—a widowed mother—that she was "over-sexed" and couldn't talk about it. Still others were horrified at the suggestion that they enlighten their children.

Perhaps the most extreme reaction came from a mother whose premarital experiences had included thirteen procured abortions. It is easy to understand her feeling that sex is vile, her revolt at the idea of her small son's "knowing such nasty things"—"she would never tell him." A similar feeling on the part of women and men apparently living a normal life calls for more explanation, which, in the records dealt with, is seldom forthcoming. Probably a great variety of unhappy experiences, early or late, accounts for it; Mrs. Grant's case is but one among many.

However, a parent whose initiation in sex matters was unfortunate does not necessarily repeat the errors of his own education with his children. Mrs. Vail,¹ though in many respects she badly mishandled her small daughter, was spurred on by her own unhappy experiences to a really heroic effort to educate the child along sex lines. She had been "too innocent," she said, till she was a big girl; finally she had asked an older girl how babies came and had been horribly shocked by the answer; she had hated the idea of sex relations between her parents, and her father because of

¹ See pages 48 and 66 for earlier references to this family.

his part in them. She had determined that her child should learn things early and in a scientific way, had begun by giving her some information before the birth of her little brother. Later, in an effort to acquire reliable knowledge to pass on, she had stirred up the school her daughter attended to arrange a scientific talk for mothers; later still she had dissected a chicken for the child's benefit, showing her its various organs.

It is interesting to note, in passing, how Mrs. Vail's efforts were interfered with by a prudish neighbor. This woman, shocked by Florence Vail's retailing of her newly acquired information, protested to the mother. When the plan for the lecture was made known to her she blocked it by her horrified protests. Very likely Mrs. Vail's handling of her material was not so scientific as she meant it to be. Nevertheless, there is something fine in this mother's refusal to repeat old errors, in her struggle to find a way to save her child from the misery she had known.

On the whole, it seems well for us all to realize that the problems of sex education are still far from being fully solved.¹ Florence Vail's curiosity had been by no means satisfied by her mother's teachings; even had these been highly skilled, the neighbor's outraged comments and the quarrels between the child's parents, which turned largely upon their unsatisfactory relations and the mother's jealousy, would doubtless have forced that curiosity to a growth which mere instruction alone could not restrain.

¹ Among the best brief publications on this topic are: *Some Information for Mother*, by John Palmer Gavit, published by the American Social Hygiene Association, 370 Seventh Avenue, New York (15 cents); *Some Undesirable Habits and Suggestions for Treatment*, by Jessie Taft, published by the National Committee for Mental Hygiene, 370 Seventh Avenue, New York (15 cents); and *Sex Education*, published by the Child Study Association of America, 54 West 74th Street, New York (10 cents). The above mentioned associations publish bibliographies and other material of great value to parents. See also reading list on page 331.

Where excitations in the home or elsewhere develop in a child an exaggerated interest in matters which he is intellectually and emotionally too immature to understand, even the most highly equipped of professional guides may find the solution of the problem perplexing.

One other illustration of difficulties in the way of sex education of children by their parents may be offered. A boy of eight had been one of a group of children who indulged in sex-play together in a neighbor's barn. When the proceedings were discovered, the father—an intelligent, well educated, successful man, said to be “sunny” and “equable” in disposition, and devoted to his children—whipped the child and told him that he “must get his mind off the subject, as curiosity or indulgence in any sex activities would affect his mind.” Although the youngster already “had some information about sex from his observation of several dogs which the family had owned,” his father “did not think it was time to discuss the subject any further or give him any additional information.” Why? Because “his own experience had been” that the grandfather, by discussing the subject of sex with him at too early an age, had aroused a precocious curiosity in him.

This is all we are told, and it is little enough. How old was the father when this discussion with the grandfather took place? What gave rise to it? What information did the grandfather impart, what was his manner of imparting it? What was the grandfather's own personal attitude toward sex, his character, his background? Obviously we cannot know. The father himself could not answer all these questions, could perhaps not even trace out completely all the effects of this early experience upon his own development. Still less could he—or we—begin to guess the effect upon his son of the talking to and the whipping which had

been his own response to the new emergency. There was no indication, in the clinic contacts with the boy, that he was suffering any morbid repression as a result. However, as his mother put it, "he does not freely express the things about which he is sensitive."

Perhaps the point which most needs emphasizing in this story is the lack of understanding of the workings of the human mind displayed by Mr. Tufts when he told his son that "he must keep his mind off the subject." Even without the aid of the fears likely to be aroused by the warning that "curiosity or indulgence in sex activities would affect his mind," few courses would tend to center attention more certainly upon any topic than the erection of a taboo against it. The notion that a child who had shared in such sex activities as are described in this record was in danger of having curiosity aroused by a talk with his father seems hardly tenable. Sheer inability on the father's part to cope with the crisis in any more intelligent manner doubtless accounts for his ineffective handling of it. A clumsy effort at enlightenment by the grandfather may in part account for that inability, but could hardly have been more hurtful than many a clumsy effort at repression.

There are, of course, many other ways in which parents can misdirect a child's thinking on sex questions. Letting him share their sleeping room is one of these—a practice astonishingly common, to judge by clinic records, even in families where there is no financial pressure sufficient to account for it. An impressive mass of evidence assembled in the study of neurotics shows that observation of adult sex relations by young children often leads to serious emotional disturbances which continue for years after their cause is forgotten. While in none of the records studied have we been able definitely to trace harmful results to such observa-

tions on the part of a child, there has more than once been ground for suspicion that such a connection might exist. Similarly, the practice of letting a boy share his mother's bed, generally condemned as highly injudicious by psychiatrists and other students of sex problems, is fairly frequently recorded; and the fact that our data afford no absolute proof of bad results should not keep us from noting the extreme undesirability of such an arrangement.¹

Returning from this brief mention of the danger of directly stimulating a child's sex interests to the theme of repressive conduct illustrated in this chapter, one can hardly fail to be impressed by the large part played in producing the parental attitudes involved by ignorance, by tradition, and by the parents' own experiences in childhood.

Most parents since the beginning of time have assumed the responsibilities of rearing their young without having undergone any special training to fit them for the task. When they have done well, it has presumably been partly because theirs was a reasonably mature, well-balanced emotional life; partly because they were capable of generalizing sanely from their own youthful experiences and those of other children known to them, thus arriving at common sense principles of child management; partly because they were naturally interested in the developing child mind, in the task of understanding and guiding it. If they have failed, the trouble may have had its root in early spoiling which rendered them self-centered and selfish, or in early parental harshness which roused in them angers and resentments that later found release in their dealings with their own offspring; it may have been the result of mistaken notions impressed upon

¹ On this point, see *Three Problem Children*, pages 59-60, for Dr. Glueck's discussion of the case of a thirteen-year-old boy who slept with his mother.

them in youth, sheer dull acceptance of old catch words, failure to observe, remember, think things out for themselves; or, yet again, it may have been traceable to absorption in interests which made child study and guidance distinctly secondary or wholly unappealing.

The literature of the world has of course for centuries past included occasional contributions on the rearing and education of children, and today the concentration of many able minds on study of this subject is resulting in a flood of material which should soon reach every parent capable of absorbing ideas from the printed page. Enlightened as to the general laws which govern the development of children and as to the facts regarding sex development in particular, each such parent is faced by a double task: study of his child and study of himself. He needs to examine his own past in the light of those laws and those facts, tracing back his faults and failings, his special weaknesses and strengths, to their earliest origins, noting the effect upon him of many a stream of influence which he may never before have envisaged as such; noting, too, how his successes and failures, his griefs and joys and disappointments, past and present, affect his attitude toward his child and his demands upon this small new experiment in humanity; and he needs to learn, in the light of these laws and these self-communings, to observe that child disinterestedly and impersonally, gaining and holding his confidence by his gentleness and justice and open-mindedness. As the number of parents who thus apply themselves to understanding and helping their children increases, unhappiness and thwarted, unwholesome attitudes in the young will surely tend to disappear, together with the many forms of social misbehavior associated with such states of mind.

It is clearly impossible, in a chapter such as this, to take

up all the false ideas regarding sex which a parent may cherish, or all the errors in sex education which he may commit. The discussion is hardly more than a starting point. Its chief aim is to help some few men and women to take a more impersonal, objective attitude toward their own youthful experiences. For until the parent who has suffered in his own person from distorted ideas and warping incidents can free himself from their influence there is little hope that he will deal wisely and helpfully with the difficulties of his children.

How those who have suffered severely are to achieve such freedom is another question, and one to which there can be no general answer. Many will succeed in reeducating themselves, others will need help in the process from thoroughly equipped professional guides. Yet all can do something to help themselves by cultivating a habit of honest thinking which refuses to take refuge behind conventional or comforting explanations, and by seeking light upon their problems from the highest modern authorities.

CHAPTER IX

IDEAS REGARDING THE CHILD'S OBLIGATIONS TOWARD HIS PARENTS AND REGARDING DISCIPLINE

The disciplinary approach to behavior problems in home and school has failed to bring about any lasting contribution to their solution. Moralizing opinions, or any other hostile approach, have as little effect in combating delinquency as they have in a case of pneumonia. . . . A hard-wrung confession of guilt and inferiority is not the proper foundation for that tremendous release of the spirit which results in true repentance. Repentance, socially considered, is just another name for intense yearning to be one with one's fellow man, to return to a relationship in which one feels confidence, security and response.

MIRIAM VAN WATERS,
The Delinquent Attitude.

CLOSELY related to the misconceptions of the child's nature which have been discussed are certain conceptions of his relation to his parents which are commonly taken for granted without much thought. " 'His own child!'—If we could eliminate the possessive implications of this phrase, how much easier our task as parents would be!"¹ exclaims a psychiatrist; while a poet solemnly warns us, "Your children are not your children."²

Out of the parental attitude of possessiveness toward children arises the conviction as to what the child "owes" his parents which is so often a basic principle in family life, especially that of certain groups in which the parents' claim to all the wages of a working son or daughter is taken for

¹Bernard Glueck, M D., Concerning Parental Attitudes, *Child Study*, March, 1927.

²Kahlil Gibran, *The Prophet*. See quotation, p. 2.

granted. Such a primary concern with the financial aspects of the parent-child relationship clearly moved one father whose son, after several serious thefts, was about to be saved from commitment to a common reformatory by being sent away to an exceptionally high grade industrial school. At the last moment this man almost upset the plan because of fear lest during the longer absence required at the better institution the boy might "lose his loyalty to the family." Equally obsessed with financial considerations, in this case with the importance of her own contribution to the family home, was one teacher-mother who during the clinic visitor's first call told how she had been accustomed to buy her eleven-year-old son any toy or book he wanted, and then turned to the child to say, "Now don't you think you could be a good boy after all mother has done for you?"

Students of child life will not be surprised that both these youngsters, in addition to their other faults, were conspicuously disrespectful and disregarding of parental authority. Gratitude is, indeed, a sentiment whose fostering conditions are difficult of definition; but one sure way to nip it in the bud is to demand it as a right. Real family unity is an outgrowth of mutual love and sympathy and understanding, and expresses itself naturally in mutual service at need; a sense of favors conferred, on the part of a parent, hardly conduces to the growth of any of these. While insistence on a due return may bring perfunctory expressions of gratitude or perfunctory performance of duty, these are a poor substitute for the real thing; and often enough such insistence fails to insure even surface conformity.

In contrast with such grasping parents as those referred to, avid for all that they conceive their children to "owe" them, may be set fathers and mothers who specifically disclaim any virtue or self-sacrifice in their relationship with their off-

spring. To such parents the delight felt in a baby is enough to pay many times over for its care and keep, while the enrichment of life that comes with seeing the world anew through the eyes of growing boys and girls is ample reward for their labors. Then too, there is the issue of simple justice. As one mother known to the writer has been accustomed to say to her children when insisting that they should not put her welfare first in their plans, "We brought you into the world for our own satisfaction; you never asked to be born." If more parents kept this simple and obvious fact in mind, fewer children would seek to shuffle off bonds because they would no longer be felt as bonds.

Disciplinary ideas are often closely related to conceptions of a child's duty to his parents, and both are likely to be the result of the parents' own early training and experience. Domineering parents who had themselves been domineered over as children have already been discussed at some length, and others appear in the narratives. The tradition that makes severity a virtue furnishes a wonderful rationalization of impulses to anger which, repressed in youth or in adult work relations, tend to find expression in dealings with those younger and weaker than one's self. The self-righteousness of such highly moral and religious fathers as Mr. Osborn¹ and Mr. MacAllister,² their complete blindness to the weak spots in their own armor, is the most appalling thing about them.

Somewhat different in type from these two, and, as events were to prove, far less set in his ways, was the father of three small boys who brought his eldest son to the clinic. Proud of his record as a disciplinarian in the army and in two military academies where he had since taught, this young man could not understand why his seven-year-old son did not

¹ See p. 57.

² See p. 242.

respond to his methods. George Jr. was disobedient both at home and at school, helped himself to the teacher's pencils and the neighbors' flowers, seemed utterly indifferent to the consequences of his misdemeanors. When the boy's relative isolation from children of his own age, lack of adequate play space, of playthings, and of outlets for his energies generally, were mentioned as partial explanations to Mr. Stiles, he readily admitted the bearing of these conditions on the conduct which worried him; and no less whole-heartedly did he accept the suggestion that one thing the boy needed was more attention from himself, was a father whom he could confide in and who would meet him on his own level, rather than a stern disciplinarian. While less than a complete revolution was effected in this parent's management, the greater interest he began to show in his son, together with a better school adjustment which was worked out, seems to have entirely remedied the troubles complained of. It is interesting to note that in discussing his problem with the clinic worker Mr. Stiles "described his own family when he was a boy and said neither he nor any of his four brothers confided in their parents, and that he supposed he had been influenced by this in dealing with George."

Far more unpromising was another father who, displeased at having a stupid son, and annoyed at his wife's spoiling of the boy, was openly combatting her and more or less terrifying the youngster by shouting at him and slapping him. Described as big, burly, with glaring eyes and a scowl and an apparent grudge attitude, Mr. Conrad was said by a brother to be "just like their father only ten times worse." Yet this alarming person, seen alone, turned out to have another side. He admitted that spanking might not be the best way to manage Bennie; "as a boy he was often administered severe raps at school and at home, and it was hard for him to change

his idea that this was the only way to handle children." To the visitor's explanation of the harm that "hollering" does to a nervous child he listened with interest, and not only did he promise to try to be gentle, he actually did, by his wife's report, grow milder in his treatment of the boy. A history of mental disease in the mother which came to light about the time of this interview threw a revealing light on many hitherto unexplained domestic difficulties and made the man's improvement the more noteworthy.

The topic of domineering attitudes on the parents' part has already been discussed so fully in Chapter V that there is no need to elaborate it here. We may however note that, disastrous as the extreme of authoritative discipline is likely to prove to the tempers and dispositions of children subjected to it, its essential weakness comes to light quite as much in the intellectual as in the emotional field. The child who is brought up to toe the mark and obey instantly and unquestioningly receives small training in self-direction; he is not being helped to think things out for himself, and when thrown upon his own resources is likely to be completely at sea, a prey to his own vagrant impulses and to the influence of any chance comrade. The policy of taking time to explain the reasons for decisions, of giving the child time to follow explanations and accept them, may be put into effect when he is little more than a baby; and though pressure of other duties and a variety of emergency situations may at times compel the parent temporarily to abandon it, the more fully it can be carried out the greater the probability that the boy or girl will be able gradually to take over the direction of his own activities without being impelled either to revolt or to a slavish following in the beaten track.

As has been pointed out before in these pages, extreme inconsistency in discipline is probably quite as injurious to

children as consistent severity; possibly more so, since under a régime of alternating harshness and laxity the child is completely at a loss as to what is expected of him. Laxity and inconsistency, however, seem the result not of any particular theory of discipline but of lack of conviction on the parent's part as to how he should conduct himself, joined with a high degree of impulsiveness. There is thus no basis for separate discussion of these disciplinary defects under the present heading.

For what we are here concerned with is not the contribution to harsh, repressive discipline made by the thwarted emotions of parents, but the contribution made by mistaken ideas held by these disciplinarians. Often the two contributions are so intertwined as to be indistinguishable, but this is not always so. Other parents besides Mr. Ferris and Mrs. Grant in the preceding chapter have expressed relief when they found that they had been mistaken in the ideas they had been trying to live up to, or regret that their own lives had been warped by such false ideas; and have been glad to abandon violent modes of discipline which they had conceived it to be their duty to employ. Disciplinarians whose harshness is thus a matter of mistaken principle rather than a flaring-up of repressed angers may be few in number relatively, but the certainty that even a few of them exist makes the effort to suggest a different point of view to them seem worth making.

CHAPTER X

IDEAS REGARDING HEREDITY

We are so fiercely interested in our children that we can hardly see in their proper relations the facts that touch them; our hopes, our fears, our ideals, almost cut off our perception of realities . . . Men of science are very naturally so inclined to emphasize what we *know* and what we can predict as a result of our scientific knowledge, that they sometimes forget to emphasize important things that we do *not* know and can *not* predict. . . . There is no one on earth that can predict what combination of qualities will come from the union of any two normal individuals, and there never will be. "Who toiled a slave may come anew a prince" in the next generation,—by the working out of recombinations in heredity. . . . Knowledge of these open possibilities must inspire our efforts to help our children unfold what is in them; and must lend an interest to their progress that any false belief in a set and iron law of inheritance would crush out. The literally inexhaustible variety of possibilities offered by nature realizes for practical purposes the ideal of freedom of the will; realizes in effect the dream that there are unlimited possibilities for any individual.

HERBERT S. JENNINGS, in *Suggestions
of Modern Science Concerning Education*.

OF ALL the mistaken ideas that produce unfortunate attitudes toward children on the part of parents, none are more dangerous, potentially, than ideas regarding heredity. While they appear only occasionally to rise to their maximum of destructiveness, these ideas carry with them always the threat of injury.

Biologists interested in promoting the spread of eugenic principles sometimes complain of present-day overemphasis on the influence of environment, which they declare encourages reckless mating and thus threatens the degradation of the race. That reckless mating is common, that it repre-

sents a grave threat to our civilization, few persons of intelligence—certainly few physicians or social workers—will deny. But because workers in these two professions deal with human beings already in existence and of fixed and unchangeable heredity, because, pledged as they are to the task of improving the lot of living persons, they inevitably deal largely with environmental conditions, they see another side of this age-old heredity-environment issue. They know that if disregard of hereditary dangers before mating is a source of evil, exaggerated emphasis on such dangers after the decisive step has been taken is hardly less so; that the lack of consideration which often precedes the launching of new lives is matched by the excessive anxiety with which children are often watched from birth, their characteristics noted and referred back to supposed origins, their futures forecast with dire prognostications. These workers know, furthermore, that failure to appreciate the influence exerted by environment permits fears regarding heredity to grow into obsessions which paralyze effort and help to bring about the very results feared; and that these fears themselves are largely the result of misinformation, of notions regarding heredity long since discarded by experts.

What are some of these mistaken notions which we find exerting a formative influence upon parents' attitudes toward their children?

The commonest and most all-inclusive of them is the conviction that a child who resembles a parent or other ancestor in certain ways is going to be "just like him"; that particular qualities and characteristics are transmitted as such from one generation to the next, the individual being thus predetermined by his inheritance.

It is of course matter of common observation that children are more or less like their parents in body, mind, and

disposition, and scientific study has proved that such resemblances do in fact exist, and are only slightly less, on the average, than resemblances between own brothers and sisters. This, however, does not mean—according to the leading biologists of today—that the parent forms the child in his own image, bequeathing to the youngster his own special talents and tastes, or saddling him with his temper, his obstinacy, his “nerves,” or any of his other faults and failings. For in the first place the germ cells which unite to form the new human being are not produced by the bodies of the parents; they are direct descendants by division of the original cells which many years earlier united to form each of these two, and have been merely carried and nourished within the bodies of the parents since the parents themselves were conceived. How far, if at all, these cells are modified during their sojourn in the parental body is not known, but most biologists believe that such modifications are, under normal conditions, insignificant. Which particular cells out of the many carried by each parent unite to form any new individual is regarded as a matter of chance—which means only that the laws governing the combination are unknown. Each cell carries an assortment of factors believed to have power to influence future development in specific ways, and as the number of factors is very great, the chance that any two cells will carry precisely the same assortment is almost inconceivably remote. Thus no two children of a marriage, unless it be identical twins, are ever exactly alike, and no child is ever a replica of either parent. Traits are not transmitted as such; each is believed to be the result of interaction between various factors and other parts of the germ cells, and of further interaction between the being resulting from the union of these cells and the environment. The mingling of two lines of ancestry is like “a mingling of two

mosaics, each particle of which retains its individuality," and "even if overshadowed in a given generation may manifest its qualities undimmed in later generations,"¹ under favoring conditions. "Parent and child are alike because they are both products of the same line of germ-plasm, both are chips from the same old block"²—not because of direct inheritance of developed traits or habits. The poet whom we have quoted was thus speaking literal truth when he said, "Your children are not your children . . . they come through you but not from you. . . ."²

What changes in attitude toward his child might one hope to see in the parent who had grasped this biological interpretation? If he is bursting with pride over a young genius he believes himself to have produced, would it not be reasonable to expect a shade of humility to enter into that pride? If he feels himself disgraced by a dullard son, may he not be helped to a saner, more impersonal view of the child's problem if he realizes that he (or his wife) has been merely lucky in having drawn from the ancestral stream of life a choicer assortment of determining factors than did the youngster?

But realization of the fact that biologically we are far less the actual creators of our children than we had supposed, covers less than half of the common misunderstanding that has been pointed out. For at the same time few of us realize to how great an extent we *are* their creators, socially. "Personalities are not absolutely predetermined in the germ cells from which we came. . . . Adult characteristics are potential and not actual in the germ, and their actual appearance depends upon many complicated reactions of the germinal units with one another and with the environment. . . . There are many possible personalities in each of us,

¹ Michael F. Guyer, *Being Well Born*, pp. 11 and 12

² Kahlil Gibran, *The Prophet*.

and what we actually are is only a fraction of what we might have been. . . . Since the environment cannot be all things at once many hereditary possibilities must remain latent or undeveloped. Consequently the results of development are not determined by heredity alone but also by extrinsic causes."¹ And who but the child's parents control most of the "extrinsic causes" which affect him during his early years? Who, then and later, chiefly determine the environmental influences, the social influences, to which he is subjected?

If the parents of a child do not transmit their developed characteristics to him, evidently direct transmittal from more remote ancestors cannot take place and the chances of close resemblance to such ancestors diminish with each generation. Yet there are occasional instances where a child closely resembles a grandparent—or an uncle or aunt—in some few conspicuous characteristics; and in such a case a parent may become obsessed with the notion that the child is like the relative in question in many more ways than appear, indeed that he is a replica of that relative. A trait especially disliked and feared in the older person may thus be imagined to be present, with resulting alarm and anxiety, also at times distaste, dislike, or even active animosity toward the child. Thus the parents of a little girl of five who was badly spoiled and inclined to whine and show off were greatly alarmed lest she become like an aunt who had shown similar traits as a child and had grown up to be a vain, silly woman. Thus again, the parents of an only son early became convinced that he had inherited the obstinacy of a grandfather heartily disliked by both. As the boy grew they fastened upon trait after trait in which he resembled

¹ Edwin Grant Conklin, *Heredity and Environment in the Development of Men*, pp. 324 and 325.

this obnoxious ancestor, while a growing antipathy fostered by the identification gradually displaced their original love for the boy. When grandfather and grandson met and struck up an active friendship, the worst fears of the father and mother seemed to them to be confirmed, and they appeared practically to give up hope of making anything worth while out of their son. In these cases, as in many similar ones, misconceptions regarding biological facts, with the fears they engendered, were joined with complete failure on the parents' part to see how their own handling of their child from infancy on—indulgent handling in the one instance, repressive handling in the other—had contributed to the development of the detested traits.

Failure to realize how their fears regarding the inheritance and future of the child may react upon the child himself is another grave factor in many such situations. Suppose it were true that a girl had inherited something that predisposed her to become a vain, silly woman like her aunt, or a nervous, complaining one like her mother; suppose that a boy had received some hereditary factor that inclined him to display stubbornness or ill temper or shifty character, like some obnoxious forebear; and suppose, further, that it were the chief desire of the parents of such a child to help him or her to develop to the full these offensive characteristics. Could there be any better way of bringing about this result than to begin at an early age and persistently continue remarking in the child's hearing upon the fatal resemblance, and foretelling the fearful outcome? Yet this is precisely what many parents and other adults, often apparently of good intelligence, are actually doing.

Even without such overemphasis upon the supposed predestination of heredity, children are only too likely to catch the implications of ordinary remarks upon family

traits and resemblances. "I've got a right to be wild, papa was when he was young," remarked the son of a reformed reprobate who was fond of telling tales of other days; while another youngster, whose father had shattered all his boyish ideals, despairingly exclaimed, "Look at my old man, what can you expect of me?" More often than we know, children acquire the common conviction that there is no use in fighting against hereditary influences, that they are foredoomed to develop inherited faults and failings and repeat old errors.

It would be interesting to know in how many juvenile and adult delinquents such fear-engendering beliefs have helped to bring about predicted actions; in how many other young people the conviction that they were doomed by heredity to mental collapse has played a part in bringing on such collapse. Certainly when a child follows in the footsteps of forebears who have been constantly held up to him as fearful examples and warnings we are justified in questioning whether it is heredity which has brought about the result, or suggestion backed by self-doubt and shame and fear. Such is the case of a girl who at six learned she was adopted, and who soon after began to be told about her parents: how her mother had been wild as a girl and had run after the boys until it became necessary to send her away from home; how her father had been a good-for-nothing vagabond who stole and was imprisoned and broke jail. Everything wrong in the child's behavior, as she grew, was attributed to her inheritance from these parents, whose evil traits the foster-mother was sure would crop out in her. If at thirteen the girl was a thief and a sex delinquent, is it perfectly clear that this behavior had been predetermined by heredity?

In the foregoing paragraphs an effort has been made to point out the harm which may result from holding distorted

notions regarding the influence of heredity. The attempt, as part of this effort, to indicate how popular conceptions of the way heredity works differ from scientific facts and well established theories necessarily falls short of success, since several chapters would be needed to do justice to the theme. Free use has been made of quotations from biological sources, for the reason that it is from biologists that the most extreme statements regarding the all-determining power of heredity and the relative unimportance of environment come. Certain writers in this field would lead a reader to suppose that all the efforts of devoted parents and teachers, of medical and social agencies, to understand and help delinquent children were in vain, since the question whether the child was to become a thief or a prostitute or a good citizen had already long since been determined in the constitution of the germ cell from which he or she developed. It is heartening, therefore, to find such extreme views controverted in the final chapter of the book from which we have most frequently quoted, a book recognized as an authority on biology and eugenics the world over. To any one who cannot take time to read the entire volume we recommend this final chapter, on "Genetics and Ethics,"¹ as a means of clearing up any lingering doubts regarding the worthwhileness of social effort to help developing human beings solve their difficulties.

Psychiatrists and social workers who have been allied with them in the newer phases of work for children have been among those who have insisted on the worthwhileness of such effort. Not that they underrate the importance of hereditary handicaps, with their background, their experience in dealing with desperate human problems, they would have to be blind indeed to do so. But to them the environ-

¹ Conklin, *Heredity and Environment* pp 319-344.

ment of a child is no longer the mere sum total of physical surroundings formerly thought of when the word was mentioned, and apparently the definition of the term still in the minds of some of the extremist eugenic faction. When set in contrast with heredity, environment must be taken to include all the personalities with which the individual comes in contact: their attitudes and behavior, their words and acts and facial expressions and muscular tensions, all the outward and visible—or feelable—signs of their inward mental and emotional states.

Those who have studied most closely this pulsating human environment know how even two children in the same family, reared by the same parents in the same home, sharing a common sleeping-room and playground, attending the same school, may yet grow up in essentially different environments because of the different attitudes toward them of father and mother and other relatives, of teachers and playmates. The fact that the outer physical shell of each child or his inborn mental capacities may have much to do with the attitudes of others toward him does not contradict the fact that his environment is what it is. The child who is "too smart"¹ for his feeble-minded mother and only fairly intelligent father would have been the dull brother in many a superior family, and made to feel his relative inferiority. No more complacent youngster has ever been encountered by the writer than a certain only child with an equipment that placed him on the borderline of mental deficiency, whose doting mother had consistently assured him that all the teachers who criticized him in school were blockheads. In the average family, with brothers and sisters of average intelligence, what would this boy's lot have been? How the social environments even of twin brothers may differ is

¹ See narrative so named, p. 167.

beautifully illustrated in Dr. Thom's story of Sam and Peter,¹ where the sunny, friendly baby was made much of from birth, while the timid, withdrawing one was more and more neglected.

No: though "the hereditary constitution sets the limits to the possibilities of the stock . . . environment determines which of those possibilities shall be realized."² "Things cannot be predetermined in heredity which are not also predetermined in environment."³ If we wish to minimize risks of having inferior offspring we should carefully consider the family as well as the individual record of the person we contemplate marrying—remembering, however, that, except in so far as the presence of genetic defect has been definitely determined, "he would be a bold prophet who would undertake to predict the type of personality which might be expected in the children of a given union."⁴ But once a child has come into being, it is worse than folly to let one's mind dwell on the past. From the many ancestors, most of them unknown to us, who have contributed unknown influences to making him what he is at birth, he may have inherited almost any sort of foundation for the life he, with our help, is to build up. If we think we detect in him traits that promise to make trouble, it will profit us more to search our own daily lives, our ways of meeting his tentative strivings at adjustment in this puzzling, complex world, our words and acts in his presence, than to look for parallel behavior in any of his forebears. Familiarizing ourselves with the best thought of the best minds regarding human psychology and methods of child rearing will keep us alive and hopeful, while looking backward into a past whose mysteries we can-

¹ Douglas A. Thom, M. D., *Everyday Problems of the Everyday Child*, p. 8.

² Julian S. Huxley, *The Stream of Life*, p. 45.

³ Conklin, *Heredity and Environment*, p. 325.

⁴ Conklin, *Heredity and Environment*, p. 306.

not hope to penetrate, whose work, so far as we and our child are concerned, is finished, can benefit us little and may harm us much.¹

In nothing that has been written have we intended to suggest that mistaken ideas on heredity are the only influences that lead parents to express anxieties about their children's inheritance in ways injurious to the children. Some emotional drive there probably always is behind these ideas, and while fear is perhaps the commonest source of such a drive, anger and hatred undoubtedly also play their part in many cases. When the mother of a young man makes a point of assuring an interested social worker, at every opportunity, that "He will never amount to anything—he is just like his father," it is clear enough that she is getting a certain satisfaction out of identifying the youth with her husband and wreaking her detestation of the elder man on the younger. Another mother, devoted to one son who was "just like" herself, found everything wrong with a younger boy who was "just like" his father and paternal grandmother. In such cases—and this is but an exaggeration of a fairly common situation—mere correction of mistaken notions on heredity would probably be without effect in changing attitudes determined mainly by deep currents of feeling.

It may indeed be urged that intellectual concepts have so little to do with determining attitudes that our efforts, in these last four chapters, to point out the harm done by mistaken notions on various subjects are largely misapplied. That we fully appreciate the driving force of emotions is sufficiently indicated, we believe, in the earlier chapters of this

¹ This warning applies as well to current notions regarding the "marking" of a child by prenatal influences of various sorts—notions quite without scientific foundation.

study; but that the influence of misinformation is negligible we cannot agree. Obviously, to determine the relative contributions made from the realms of thought and feeling in any given instance is beyond our power. The suggestions that have arisen out of the clinic records studied are here set down with full realization of the slight contribution they represent to clarification of the various topics covered. If they lead some few readers to profitable trains of reflection and the seeking out of authorities who can help them settle doubtful points, they will have served their turn.

PART III

NARRATIVES

The simplest life history of a mind is an unfathomably rich and complicated drama connected by a million threads with the environing world. . . .

OSKAR PFISTER,
Love in Children and its Aberrations.

In classroom work we know too well that if a child has had no grounding in the fundamentals of primary arithmetic he cannot do the work of the advanced grades with any certainty. So it is with relationships. If a child has not the experience and development, the sense of security and trust that are the outgrowth of the proper parent-child relation, he will be unable to cope with the greater demands of adult relationship. But he should not remain in these relationships too long any more than he should repeat grades. The relationship of the parent and child should be continuously progressive. Its aim should be the liberation of the child as an individual, so that he may follow his own path whether or not that path is the one that we would have chosen for him. He should be united to us only by the bonds of comradeship and understanding. In the larger sense we can choose nothing for our children. We can try to choose our own path clearly and then use our clearness of vision to help the child upon his own way.

FRANCES G. WICKES,
The Inner World of Childhood.

HIS OWN RESPONSIBILITY

WARREN BERTRAM at the age of six was as contrary and belligerent a youngster as one could readily find; and these traits were reported to be no new acquisition. If when he wanted his mother to feed him she cited the example of a small neighbor—"Lucy Miller can feed herself," he would reply, "Say, I can lick her." If it was suggested that certain young friends were doing better than he in school, the answer was the same, "I can lick them." And Warren spoke the truth: he not only could, but did, at every opportunity, "lick" as many of his contemporaries as he could handle; recently he had beaten up the minister's son, who was a full year older. So active was his imagination along these lines that when he had been told, at the age of four, that a baby brother was soon to arrive on the scene, he had declared, "First I will take care of it and be good to it; and when it is big enough, we can fight."

Though he did not expect to be fed any longer, Warren demanded so much attention at meal time that it would have been as easy to feed him outright; he often took from one to two hours for a meal that he could have consumed in twenty minutes, refusing to eat many of the dishes set before him, and only by endless coaxing was pulled through it at last. The problem of inducing him to dress himself was equally difficult; he seemed to have no concentration or persistence, and would use the same guile with his mother that she had employed with him, saying, "Do you think you could put this shoe on, mother?" "Just see how quickly you can do it!" His interest in any task set him was gone before he was

half through, and he would insist, "You finish it, mother." The only exception was where there was hammering to be done, or tinkering with other tools; then his cry would be, "Let me do it, mother." From the time when he was a few months old he had seemed possessed to do the opposite of whatever was requested of him. He was easily angered, on such occasions his first impulse was to grab something and hit the offender, and he acted on this impulse frequently. He also took delight in kicking and poking and punching the housemaids—often quite without provocation so far as their treatment of him was concerned.

Behind this behavior problem which caused Warren's mother to bring him to the clinic appeared a background which would seem all that could be demanded to insure a wholesome and happy childhood. The parents were intelligent, cultivated, devoted to one another and to their children. A stable and sufficient income earned by work congenial to the father made possible a comfortable, attractive home in a pleasant neighborhood where there were plenty of suitable playmates. It was only when Warren's early history was studied that some of his peculiarities could be partially accounted for.

His start in life had been normal in every way, but owing to feeding difficulties he had been a fretful baby. In this matter the mother had followed the advice of a physician, giving him from the age of six months a prescribed diet to supplement breast feedings. He had developed normally except that he was somewhat underweight, and a bit slow in learning to speak; he still had difficulty with some of the consonants, for example, saying "f" for "th." He had also been a very restless sleeper who had constantly to be covered up, and getting him to sleep at nap-time had been a struggle sometimes prolonged through two hours of rocking.

From the age of three-and-a-half Warren had attended kindergarten, and he was now in the first grade. For a long time he had seemed to get little out of the experience—was more inclined to fight with the other children than to work with them, didn't like his teachers, was forever thinking up reasons why he should be allowed to stay at home—"it was a long way," he "didn't want to hurry his breakfast," he "wanted to stay home and play with daddy" and so forth. The truth, his mother thought, was that he didn't like to share things with the other children and that he objected to discipline.

At the kindergarten his bids for attention were marked, though he did not resort to tantrums. He would arrive in a "Well, here I am" spirit, march into the middle of the room, and wait to be noticed before he would make a move to take off his wraps. He often refused to enter into games, but when he was once in and forgot himself, would play nicely. Now, in the first grade, his chief difficulties were inattention, lack of concentration, and a habit of talking while the teacher or supervisor was trying to explain something. This was attributed by his teacher not to meanness but to lack of self-control; he was, she thought, improving. With his classmates, too, he was now taking a more active part in games, whereas at first he had paid little attention to them or they to him. He was thus a much less serious problem at school than at home.

The basis of the boy's home behavior seemed to be two-fold. For the first four years of his life he had received the attention usually concentrated upon an only and a not very vigorous child. Then had come the new baby, whose way of absorbing the mother had at first roused his bitter resentment. Later he had seemed to accept the situation, had followed his own announced plan of "being good to" the

small brother; but since the child had begun to interfere with his playthings, the old antagonism was showing itself again. In an endeavor to keep first place with his parents he was bidding for attention with every babyish trick suggested to him by his past experience.

Warren's father is described as a "pleasant, lean man with a twinkling eye." He was a scholar—one of the editors of a literary review, and a well-known lecturer. His only fault as a parent seemed to arise from the virtue of unselfishness; he was too ready to yield to his children, even letting Warren snatch the "funny paper" from his hand without protest. He had high ideals for his family, and was inclined on many points to hold the children up to adult standards. He read to Warren a great deal, and the boy showed keen delight in being read to, listening eagerly for hours to stories about the knights of King Arthur, or Greek folk stories.

Mrs. Bertram was a charming woman, college-bred and cultured, who was devoting herself whole-heartedly to the rearing of her children. Warren's teachers spoke most appreciatively of the cooperation she gave them. She was completely frank, and in her approach to her own problems showed an unusually scientific attitude. She had attempted to discipline Warren by the usual spankings, but finding that these merely stiffened his resistance had abandoned them. The most effective measures of control discovered by the parents were depriving him of the pleasure of being read to, and putting him to bed.

At the clinic Warren showed himself a boy of good average intelligence, and, except for his thinness and for certain minor defects, of normal physique. He was an attractive-looking youngster, who met the examiner in a fairly friendly manner, but when an attempt to get acquainted with him was made he proved himself a very demon of contrariness.

To avoid answering questions he brought forward a whole battery of tricks: he would become absorbed in examining some object on the desk or wall, would ask, with a superior smile, to have the question repeated, would demand an explanation of some word in the question, or would counter with a question of his own. Soon he began to announce that he was going, would actually go as far as the door or even out into the hall, and then return. It was evident that he was playing a game with the examiner, was experimenting to see how far he could go with him.

Under these conditions, little of interest was learned from the child except as regards his reactions to the members of his family. It happened that his father was about to go away on an extended lecture tour. Warren not only showed no regret at the prospect; he even declared that he wished his father would stay away forever, and he wished he would take his brother Bobby and the new baby with him. "I got kids enough out doors to play with, and Bobby takes my things and breaks them up." He also remarked, with some show of feeling, "Mother likes daddy the best of all of us."

These items help to complete the picture of Warren the spoiled child. Like many another youngster who had enjoyed his mother's exclusive attentions for a number of years, he resented having to share them either with a younger brother or sister or with his father. If only all these interfering relatives would depart in a body, he might be lord of all he surveyed.

No one trained to study young children who are riddles to their elders will be greatly surprised at such manifestations of jealousy; nor, on the other hand, will he take them too seriously. Nothing is commoner than for the small boy to strive to maintain a corner in mother-love. He may even

go so far as to express a wish that the father would die—which, to the childish mind, really means no more than Warren's wish that he would remove himself from the field of action. Yet the same child may, a few minutes later, be hanging upon his father with every show of devotion. The truth is that our emotional life, even in our very early years, is by no means the simple affair some people assume it to be. Love and hate, devotion and angry resentment, are frequently felt for the same person in such rapid alternation that only close study of the individual's whole behavior will reveal what is his prevailing sentiment toward the loved-and-hated one. Where a parent shows his devotion to his son in such satisfaction-giving ways as did Warren's father, there is no great likelihood that the hate element will, in the long run, down the love. Where the father is a dominating, "hollering" person who presumes upon his superior strength and has no conception of cultivating comradeship and common interests with his boy, such an outcome to the struggle is only too likely.

The trend of events in Warren's case may be briefly indicated by citation of two reports from his mother, received at intervals of several months following the initial study. These will be given as nearly as possible in her own words.

In the first interview, Mrs. Bertram described her efforts to carry out advice previously given by the physician regarding her son's eating habits: "After our last talk I told Warren that you had said that he could eat, that he would eat, and that he must eat, but that I was to stop bothering him about it. I was to place the amount of food he was supposed to eat on his plate, and to say to him, once, that he might eat it or leave it alone as he pleased; that if he didn't eat it, all right, I would say nothing more to him, but he

would get no further food until the next meal. Furthermore, I wasn't going to put an alarm clock on the table again so that he might know how long he had to eat. He would have to judge that for himself, but he must be through by the time the other people at the table were through. When I had finished this statement, Warren looked up at me and said, 'Well, in that case, I'll eat.' And he has been eating ever since!"

The second report which we cite—the final one of a longer series—came some six months later. There had been a serious interruption to the new regimen during the illness of one of the younger children, but it had proved to be a temporary interruption only.

"I want to tell you," Mrs. Bertram began, "that I believe I am 'out of the woods.' The eating problem has completely disappeared. Warren's behavior has vastly improved in all ways. I have discovered that I can get anything I want out of him if I put it up to him as a matter of his own responsibility, whereas if I try to get him to do it, he begins to play a game with me in which he always wins. I owe all this to you, because although I have always had the best advice I could get respecting the training of my child, I feel that I was always on the wrong track until you came along. I have been trying to analyze what you did for me. As near as I can make out it was the objectivity and impersonalness of the thing that won the day. You have certainly made me look at myself and what I was doing and what Warren was doing in an entirely different way. For the most part, it seems to me that you have refused to answer any of my questions; that is, have refused to lay down detailed rules for me to follow. You have simply given me a new question, or a new light on an old question to which I had to go and find the answer. As far as I am concerned, it has worked."

These are the comments of a mother well fitted by natural endowment and training to understand the new point of view regarding child training—a mother capable of self-analysis, of scientific detachment, of looking unpleasant facts in the face. Able to view both her own behavior and her child's without any enveloping mist of sentiment, she could progress toward a clearer understanding of both. The boy who had been indulging in such a display of infantile tricks was really underneath it all, she discovered, wanting to grow up. When she threw him on his own responsibility he was ready enough to behave as a child of his age should.

Yet another feature of the situation, though not at all to Warren's liking, may, we suspect, in the long run contribute to his happier adjustment. Not to place too much emphasis on the boy's testimony, it seems probable from the whole family set-up that he was right when he said, "Mother likes daddy the best of all of us." Parents who are so well suited to each other, so happily mated, that their children recognize the prior claim of their mutual devotion, are insured against the commission of many an error in handling which the ill-adjusted pair are liable to. They are not tempted to develop a favoritism for one child that works injustice to the others and injury to the favorite; their own vision, as they survey the doings and strivings of the rising generation, is unclouded by the dust arising from an arena of personal conflict. And the children, recognizing early that their elders find their chief reliance and happiness in one another, come to accept a natural order which leaves them free, in due time, to choose a life companion of their own who shall in similar fashion meet their own deepest needs. To those who have seen the wreckage wrought in the lives of young people by the exaggerated devotion of unhappy parents, the full blessedness of such a well ordered family life is apparent.

AN EX-FAVORITE

Making the child jealous . . . is still practiced in many homes. This may be done by constantly comparing one child to another, which exaggerates tremendously the inadequacies of the one and the superiority of the other. It may be brought about by showing preference or giving praise and rewards, or perhaps by letting a child feel that little or nothing is expected of him. However it may be brought about, you may be sure that making the child feel inadequate is a fruitful source of irritability and temper.

DOUGLAS A THOM, M.D.,
Everyday Problems of the Everyday Child.

FOUR-YEAR-OLD Lucile Kohlman, "a healthy, rosy-cheeked, vivacious little beauty," had worked out a system of her own for dealing with home conditions not to her liking: whenever punishment was inflicted or threatened, or any situation displeasing to her arose, she vomited. So, at least, it appeared to the visiting nurse of the baby health center; if there was any physical cause for these upsets the physician at the center, who saw the child regularly, had been unable to discover it. And now Annette, aged two, was beginning to copy her big sister. Times were lively for Mrs. Kohlman, and when the health center suggested that she visit the child guidance clinic she was quite ready to do so.

The story gradually unfolded to the clinic workers began many years before Lucile's birth.

Her mother, born thirty-odd years ago in Eastern Europe, had been the oldest daughter in a large family, so that a great deal of drudgery fell to her lot; she could not remember when she had not helped with the washing, cooking, and sewing. While these early experiences had not roused resent-

ment in her, since she regarded them as inevitable under the circumstances, they had led her to the firm resolve that she would never have a large family of her own; *her* children should not be compelled to work as she had done!

Of her father Mrs. Kohlman cherished the tenderest memories. He had been superior in education and general outlook to most of the men of their primitive community, and had been looked up to by the whole countryside. He had taken the lead in family affairs, giving much attention to the up-bringing and religious training of the children, encouraging them in their various undertakings and interests, reading aloud to them evenings, and endeavoring to make their home life pleasant.

The mother had been of a much less happy disposition; she still lived, a victim of diabetes and a thorn in the side to her surviving children. Attempts to have her share the homes of these children had led to constant bickering and had ended in explosions of anger on her part. She now occupied a small apartment alone, her eldest son making her an allowance and Mrs. Kohlman visiting her twice a week to clean house and market for her. According to Mr. Kohlman she had been in various hospitals for the mentally diseased; she hated him and his children and had threatened to kill them by burning down the house. This report lacked confirmation, but it was evident from what her daughter said that she was a most difficult person to get on with and that a sense of duty alone held her children to her.

Arduous as had been Mrs. Kohlman's early years in the old country, there had been hours of pleasure scattered through them; chief among these, as she recalled them, had been her daily baths in the river during the summer, occasional long walks in the country with girl friends, and play on the ice with her brothers. She loved cleanliness, and had

labored hard to achieve a weekly bath in winter. She had always had what she now recognized as an exaggerated sense of modesty, which was so extreme that she would not even change her dress in the presence of her mother.

Her father's death occurred while she was still in her teens, and soon afterwards the family came to America. Here the elder daughter went into a factory where she gradually developed into a skilled worker, earning fair wages. She hated the confinement of factory life, and her health suffered by it. At home she continued to be the household drudge. She was devoted to her brothers and sisters, but one by one they departed to homes of their own, until finally she was left alone to bear the brunt of her mother's increasingly vitriolic temper. She made efforts to educate herself, with small success. Finally she received an offer of marriage, her first. She cared little for the man, but she was in her late twenties and bound to an unhappy round of existence from which there seemed no other escape. Mr. Kohlman appeared to be a decent enough fellow with a steady job. She accepted him, and after a few months' engagement they were married.

Their first year together, according to Mrs. Kohlman, was happy. She led an easier life than ever before, and regained her health. Then Mr. Kohlman lost his job, and displayed a marked lack of diligence in seeking another. And, just at the beginning of this new trouble, Lucile arrived.

The baby had been desired by her parents and was adored by them both; but from the first weeks of her life she lived in an atmosphere of constant quarreling. Mr. Kohlman worked by fits and starts at one short time job after another, and during the long periods of unemployment between, seemed content to let his wife run the house on money furnished by her prosperous older brother. This state of

affairs led to constant reproaches and much bitterness of feeling. After a time the situation was rendered still more acute by the maternal grandmother's coming to share the home; she and her son-in-law were soon at swords' points and the young wife was torn between them.

Lucile's father was of about the same age as her mother, and of the same nationality and religious tradition; but he had abandoned the faith of his fathers to attach himself to a sect of free-thinkers. According to his own statement he had concealed this fact from his wife until after their marriage, fearing to alienate her, as she was very religious. He now refused to let her bring up the children in her faith, thus furnishing another ground for disagreement.

Concerning Mr. Kohlman's early life little was learned by the clinic. His wife stated that his father was a skilled artisan and an intelligent man; that his mother had died when he was a baby, and that he had been brought up by a well-to-do great-aunt who spoiled him; that he received a good education in the old country and spoke several languages; that he came to the United States in his early teens and went to work as an office boy. Of his later industrial career nothing is known until the time of his marriage when he was working as assistant manager in a small manufacturing concern. Five years later, when he became known to the clinic, he had held for over a year a rather ill-paid position as stock clerk in which there seemed no prospect of advancement. His wife's chief grievance against him at this time was that he appeared contented, despite the unsatisfactory home which his inadequate wage provided. She admitted that he worked hard when on the job, but felt him to be sadly deficient in ambition and push.

That Mr. Kohlman's personal history is thus meager is due to the stand taken by the man himself. Though not

unfriendly to the clinic worker, he refused absolutely to discuss himself or his relatives, saying, "I don't want anyone to get a line on *me*." He consented to his wife's coming to the clinic only on condition that she should give no information about him or his. After announcing his ultimatum on this point he added that there had been no mental disease in *his* family. His attitude and manner indicated both an exaggerated sensitiveness and an overgrown ego.

Mrs. Kohlman, while she obeyed the letter of the law laid down by her husband on this point, showed entire willingness to discuss the intimate details of her married life. After Lucile's birth she and Mr. Kohlman had agreed that they wanted no more children. They had accordingly restricted their intercourse and employed contraceptive measures. When Annette's coming proved the ineffectiveness of these, Mrs. Kohlman had suggested that her husband seek satisfaction elsewhere, and he had agreed. She professed to be quite content with this arrangement, while he, she said, had accepted it because of his desire to avoid the burden of more children.

Although Annette was thus an unwanted child, she had from early babyhood taken first place in the hearts of both parents. Lucile, until her coming the adored darling of the household, had been distinctly relegated to the background; any activity of hers that interfered in the slightest degree with her small sister's rights or wishes was sternly crushed.

Another repressive influence of this period had been the grandmother, who after Annette's coming again attempted for a time to live with the family. She objected to almost every move of her active little older granddaughter, with the result that the child's life had been a series of "don'ts," enforced by slaps. Since the old lady's departure, lodgers had occupied her room, so that the pressure on the family

in their remaining small quarters had continued to be severe. The parents were looking for an apartment where they would not need to rent a room, but had thus far failed to find one.

Lucile showed fondness for her baby sister and at times played happily with her, but also teased her a great deal. During the clinic worker's visit at the home the child resorted to many devices in an obvious effort to make herself the center of interest—punching Annette in the stomach and apparently enjoying the cries that followed, biting her mother's arm, endeavoring to strangle the worker and then throwing herself in her lap, crying "Do you love me, nurse? Do you love me?"

Careful inquiry into Lucile's early developmental history brought evidence that the child had made a normal start in life. Except for some difficulty in keeping milk on her stomach she had progressed fairly well during her first year, adapting herself to the gradual weaning that began at nine months and to her introduction to solid foods. Bottle-feeding was continued until she was two years of age, and the schedule laid out for her at the baby health center was followed until Annette's birth some months later, when the mother, weak and discouraged, became lax about routine.

Lucile had talked early, but had been a bit slow about walking. In other respects her development had been about average, and none of the diseases of childhood from which she suffered appeared to have left serious results behind. Since her sister's coming she had taken no regular naps, but rarely showed fatigue, running, jumping, and climbing all day. She had, however, a weakness of the ankles which caused her to fall frequently, and when she fell she was often terror-stricken and vomited. At the health center, exercises to strengthen her ankles had been given her, but the mother was lax in seeing that she took them. The child also suffered

from earache, though not so constantly and severely as before a tonsillectomy that had been performed some months earlier. Irrigations had been prescribed, but Mrs. Kohlman was not regular in giving these, though the child frequently asked for them.

Lucile did not get on well with other children, though she showed a desire to play with them. She was inclined to snatch things and would refuse to share her toys, was rough and over-ready to use her small fists. This was largely the result of her father's training: when she was tiny he had objected to some neighboring children because he thought them dirty and possible carriers of disease, and had taught Lucile not to let them touch her things; he had also deliberately trained her to fight with him. Her mother was distressed by the child's behavior, and while she punished her for it felt that it was really the father who was to blame.

As to her punishments, Mrs. Kohlman admitted that they had been frequent and severe; she had often spanked and slapped the child unmercifully, even sometimes on the head. She was now, she said, making a valiant effort to control her temper, since after punishment Lucile had several times said that she did not love her.

Annette was her mother's great joy; without the comfort she drew from her, Mrs. Kohlman did not see how she could have found the strength to cope with Lucile. It was evident that the mother's unhappy youth and ill-adjusted marital life colored her whole outlook. She worried about her children constantly, was emotional and variable in her handling of them, and at the same time, seeing no future for herself, was staking everything on the hope of being able to give them a happier life than hers had been. She frankly regarded her marriage as a failure, since she had hoped to get rid of drudgery and financial worries and had only in-

creased them. Yet in the next breath she declared that she would endure anything rather than return to factory work.

Mr. Kohlman's share in caring for the children was slight. He left their management to his wife, except that he sometimes took charge for a few hours while she went to pay a visit. He rarely punished them, but when he did was apt to punish hard. Lucile, the mother said, adored her father: "She doesn't care so much for me." That both children were devoted to him was evident to the visitor in the home, for so long as he was present they had eyes for no one else, hanging upon him every instant. It was clear that their attentions made him very nervous and he made several attempts to free himself. His only effective method of controlling Lucile seemed to be by talking to her in whispers, in a quick, excited manner, while he held her at arms' length as though about to shake her, or wagged his finger in her face. By this means he would persuade her to be quiet for a few minutes. His wife assured the worker that he was devoted to the children, and several toys and small pieces of furniture that he had made for them, bore witness to the fact. He himself later told the worker that the children compensated for the unhappiness of his married life.

According to Mrs. Kohlman, her husband was at home most of the time when not at work. One of the three rooms occupied by the family was his, and he spent many of his evenings there, reading in bed—the newspapers, or magazines and books that expounded the radical views on religious and social questions with which he was in sympathy. To the visitor from the clinic he seemed a fanatic on these subjects.

Someone has said that the child who presents behavior difficulties is no more than a chip on the troubled sea of family life. Certainly the truth of this saying is well illus-

trated by Lucile Kohlman. Tossed to and fro from birth by the turbulent emotions of two unhappy and ill-mated adults, serving to both for years as sole source of delight and refuge from miseries past and present, then suddenly thrust aside in favor of a newcomer and expected to yield first place without complaint—is it any wonder that the child's own emotional life was somewhat upset?

Yet examination of Lucile and further acquaintance with her confirmed first impressions that she was essentially a normal child, with fair intelligence and many endearing little ways. She was friendly without being bold, and showed herself extremely responsive to praise; was quite a chatterer, overflowing with tales of her small sister, their toys, their quarrels, their best dresses. She told of a baby cousin: "It is so cute, sure. It is not as big as my sister. It walks very slowly. Oh, I love it." She was very demonstrative in her affection, very eager to display her skill in drawing, full of interest in everything about her, highly distractable yet not more so than many children of her age. She impressed all with whom she came in contact as a most attractive and lovable child—more attractive than her comparatively stolid sister.

No less strong was the impression produced by the mother's favoritism for this younger sister. If Lucile had been given pencil and paper to amuse herself with while waiting, and Annette a picture book, Mrs. Kohlman would presently remark that Annette was jealous of Lucile, that she wanted pencil and paper too—thus evidently injecting a new idea into a contented little head which had been busily bent over the turning leaves. If Lucile was taken up on a friendly knee, Annette must be lifted to an equal post of honor—though she might resist and protest; if someone remarked that Lucile was "a lovely child," the mother was

quick to declare, "Here is the lovely one"—indicating her younger daughter. As one observer remarked, it was perfectly evident that Mrs. Kohlman was doing everything in her power to create jealousy between the children because she herself was jealous for Annette.

Speaking of her children's troubles, the mother dwelt on the point that both had found difficulty, when babies, in retaining milk. She did not, however, take the view that because of this early weakness their present attacks of vomiting must be due to physical causes; on the contrary, she expressed the opinion that both children could keep from vomiting if they wished. "Annette can keep hers back if I pet her a little and coax her, but Lucile won't always try hard enough. Sometimes if I get her soon enough and kind of soothe her, she can keep it back, but it usually comes as soon as something happens." Lucile's upsets, she said, were always associated with punishment or the fear of punishment—or of being "hollered at."

Asked about these punishments of her elder daughter, she not only acknowledged their frequency and severity, but went on to say that she herself was easily disturbed, and that she often carried over to the child the rage she felt against "some one else,"—even punishing her sometimes when she really had done nothing wrong. This "some one else" was not named, but the tone Mrs. Kohlman had used in speaking of her husband, and her statement, "we never get along together," left little doubt who was meant.

As to family resemblances, Annette, Mrs. Kohlman said, was like her husband, while Lucile looked and acted like her—even copying her in her temper tantrums.

With so much insight into her own behavior reactions and those of her child, it may well have seemed that it would be an easy matter to get over to the mother the additional

points needed for a full understanding of the problem. At all events, an attempt to do so was made.

The early vomiting, it was explained, had probably been due to physical causes. But it had become associated with all sorts of extra care and attention, had come to be the shortest possible route to the exact center of the family stage. So, later, when scoldings and punishments began to take the place of petting and praise, the little girl had slipped back into old grooves. A neglected older sister, she could still recapture some share of the maternal interest, as well as ward off threatened blame and blows, if she became once more the sick child. So—without, of course, any clearly thought out plan of campaign—this relapse into baby ways had developed into a mechanism or technique¹ that was at once protective, and provocative of some renewal of those demonstrations of tenderness of which she had been deprived. What Lucile was actually engaged in was the staging of an ever-renewed appeal for love and attention.

Mrs. Kohlman said she understood how this could be; and she appeared to grasp, too, the natural corollary: that the surest way to put a stop to the present outbreak of vomiting in her older daughter was to cease to discriminate against her in favor of the younger. Once the child could be reassured as to her place in the mother's heart—not, of course, by protestations, but by the long-continued experience of finding herself welcomed there; once her old childish sense of security should be reestablished, there would be no need of special drives for attention, and it might be expected that the troublesome symptoms would disappear.

This proposal to reconstruct the love-life of mother and children carried with it, of course, the cessation of all harsh

¹ Compare Dr. Thom's discussion of vomiting in *Everyday Problems of the Everyday Child*, pages 60-65

punishments and of supplementary devices employed by the mother to frighten Lucile into obedience, such as the bogey-man.

There were recommendations for physical care as well, mostly in the nature of attempts to reinforce the efforts of other health agencies. The mother should be systematic about syringing Lucile's ear; she should take her to a clinic for eye examination; she should resume the exercises for posture given by the baby health center; she should plan to have both children rest longer hours, with more fresh air in the room than she had been accustomed to allow.

Still another move advised was that Lucile be entered in kindergarten at the earliest opportunity. This suggestion the mother hailed with enthusiasm, possibly because, unlike the others, it entailed not more but less exertion on her part. Some relief for her over-wrought nerves was certainly desirable, as well as a new field of activity for Lucile in which the child might achieve not only those satisfactions that spring from learning how to do things, but a wider life of the affections.

These early recommendations, the clinic was well aware, left untouched certain deeper underlying factors. The unhappy love-life of the parents, or rather the almost certain lack, at any time in their history, of any true love-life between them, seemed largely accountable for that instability in the emotional life of both which was endangering the happiness and wholesome development of their children. Love for their offspring both had, and the desire to make possible a better life for these youngsters than they themselves had ever known; but the power to control themselves and to guide their efforts to this end was not theirs, for each was in turmoil, in a state of constant inner conflict against the other and against certain aspects of the self as well.

Incompatibility is something for which no one has yet fully accounted. We may point out, in this case, such obvious elements in the situation as the conflicting beliefs on religious questions of husband and wife; the man's misrepresentation of his views before marriage and his later refusal to let his wife follow her convictions; the woman's cold-blooded acceptance of marriage without love as a means of economic betterment, and her resentment when it turned out a poor investment. Whether beneath her lack of response to her husband lay the excessive prudery apparently instilled into her when a child by her mother, and a devotion to her father's memory which made men in general, and this one in particular, seem petty and contemptible, we can only surmise.

When, in adults who come to him as private patients, the psychiatrist unearths conflicts and incompatibilities such as these, his course is fairly clear. Whether his efforts to conquer the ills complained of will be successful may depend on factors beyond his control—such as the capacity of his patient for clear thinking, for frankness, for self-criticism, for love; but at least here before him is the center of the problem, the person who suffers and seeks help which by his coming he acknowledges he cannot give himself.

With parents who bring a troublesome child to a clinic for guidance the situation is quite different. The parents' attention is fixed and they expect the clinic's attention to be fixed upon the child, not upon them; they are the complainants, merely; and since the service is free or practically free, and they have perhaps availed themselves of it in an experimental mood rather than as the result of any firm conviction that help will be received, they are likely, at the first suggestion that their own behavior may be a causal factor

in the case, to feel astonished and irritated, and perhaps to withdraw. When at the outset one parent refuses cooperation, as did Mr. Kohlman, the chances of accomplishing anything are slight indeed.

In this instance, an early follow-up visit to the home seemed to bring evidence that the mother was making a genuine effort to carry out the advice given: she was, she said, showing much more affection for Lucile, was endeavoring to restore to the child the sense of security she had lost; and she had taken certain of the steps in hygiene and medical care urged. Soon the little girl was placed in kindergarten, where she was happy, and adapted herself well to the new situation.

Later contacts with Mrs. Kohlman, however, made it clear that she was incapable of grasping the essential issues presented or of changing her point of view. She announced that both children were vomiting less—she “had punished it out of them.” Lucile, she insisted, would respond only to “hitting.” To every attempt to present the possibilities of a more rational discipline she proved utterly impervious. She had, she declared, learned nothing about Lucile from the clinic, and she had no time to waste going down there. Ultimately, the family moved, and all connection with them lapsed.

The story of the Kohlmans is offered as representative of a type of situation known to every clinic that deals with problems of health and behavior in children. Often the unhappy family background is less clearly revealed than here, and one merely surmises from the erratic and inconsistent behavior of the parents that their own unsolved problems are creating the difficulties with their children for which they seek help. Unless they can be brought to face the situation

in its entirety, to appreciate the connection between what they feel and what they do, and between what they do and what their children do, there is little hope that the behavior of these young imitators and victims can be modified, or that they can be given that better start in life which all save the hopelessly degraded wish for their young.

HANDICAPPED

Even in those cases in which a social maladjustment results almost entirely from a physical cause, mental habits have formed that must be dealt with from a mental standpoint if they are to be corrected.

EDITH R. SPAULDING, M.D.,

Tantrums in Childhood and Related Emotional Reactions.

A CHILD who at five is capable of little more than "inexplicable dumb-show and noise" is naturally a source of anxiety to those responsible for him. Thus it was that Tad Cooms, whose only venture into the great world of school had been two tearful days in kindergarten, was referred to the clinic by the attendance officer of his district. Mr. and Mrs. Cooms, sorely perplexed as to their youngest son, heartily welcomed the opportunity to obtain expert advice.

Tad couldn't talk—except for a few stray words and phrases. When he wanted anything he made signs or "hollered," and when he wasn't understood he went into rages. He was an attractive little fellow, somewhat small for his age but apparently in fair health—the adored darling of a household of adults and near-adults.

To begin with, there was Mr. Cooms—a kindly, amiable-appearing man of fifty. He was a carpenter, a man of little education, but obviously good intelligence. "An all-round good fellow and a hard worker" was his wife's summing up. "He enjoys his work and has lots of friends. He is always jovial and joking and does not complain much—though he's rather nervous, has suffered for years from indigestion and had one nervous breakdown. When times were hard with us he used to be happy-go-lucky and never worried. I was

always the one that did the worrying—many's the time I've lain awake wondering what was going to become of us. He is never still a minute—is always working at something about the house."

Mrs. Cooms was several years younger than her husband, but in his opinion was "too old to raise children." He described her as "nervous," which apparently meant rather easily irritated by Tad and by anything that went wrong at home. Though she had formerly had much ill-health she was now, she said, scarcely ever laid up. She was a pleasant-faced, well-built woman who impressed the worker as essentially good-natured though perhaps high-strung and easily upset. "I love to read," she said, "practical articles about health and things like that; though my husband always laughs when I try to read these out loud to him. He is not at all interested in reading."

The home, which Mr. Cooms was buying, was a pleasantly located cottage with a small lawn and garden. Tad's big brothers worked, his big sister, a fine vigorous girl of fifteen, attended high school and was planning to be a kindergartner.

The atmosphere of the home was harmonious and friendly. Nearby lived a married sister whose small baby was a source of delight to all the household, including Tad. The one subject of dispute that ever came to light was the question who spoiled Tad most. On the whole, to the disinterested on-looker it appeared that the honors were about equally divided between father and mother, with big sister running a close third.

The origin of this habit of spoiling was easy to trace. Tad had been so much the last baby as to be practically an only child in a united and affectionate family of grown-ups. For nearly a year he had developed normally—was "a 100 per cent baby at three months" and was "never fretful or fussy"

his mother said. Then, just as he had been weaned and was beginning to walk and talk, he had contracted a cold accompanied by fever. A start toward recovery was followed by relapse, and for thirty-six hours convulsion followed convulsion while the child appeared unable to recognize even his mother. A first tentative diagnosis of tuberculosis of the bowels was made, but tests proved to be negative. Another physician was called who decided that the trouble was spinal meningitis. Under various regimens Tad lost steadily, until at the end of three months, more than a third of his weight had dropped away. Finally an osteopath was called. After giving several treatments he warned the family that the child's progress would be slow, and in addition to certain recommendations as to diet and outdoor life, advised that he be not urged to walk or to talk, and that he be waited on and shielded as much as possible.

It was nearly a year after this before Tad walked again, and, as already noted, he still, after a lapse of nearly four years, spoke scarcely at all, communicating his wishes mostly by gestures and inarticulate noises. Though he had never again been seriously ill, the following of the osteopath's directions had become a habit in the family, and as an inevitable reaction certain habits had been formed in the boy himself.

The difficulty with speech for which he was referred, though serious and puzzling, was thus by no means the only one needing attention.

Tad liked to be waited on, for one thing, and would "scream for something an arm's length away." Then (according to the mother) "his father would either get it for him or make Lucy—his sister—get it." When he was denied things he would scream and yell and throw anything he chanced to have in his hands on the floor. He made it his

business to bring in the daily paper, and no one could have it until he had inspected the comic sheet; if any one interfered with this routine, he was much enraged. "When he is sick," said his mother, "he is always good."

At bedtime Tad's father was in the habit of rocking him to sleep; the youngster now went off fairly early. He was restless, sometimes made sounds and cried out in his sleep, and was thought to have frightening dreams. He ate very poorly at meal time and then would demand fruit and sweets between meals, usually obtaining what he asked for. As he was troublesome at table, his mother had ceased to insist on his sitting down with the rest of the family, and fed him pretty much when and what he pleased. If an effort was made to force him to eat anything, he would go through the motions of vomiting.

Indulgent as they were, Tad's parents had made some attempts at discipline. According to his father, the child now behaved better with him than formerly: "If he sees me pick up a stick when he is misbehaving, he runs and is quiet." His mother occasionally used the razor strop on him, but said, "I feel guilty at punishing him for fear he does not understand." In another connection she stated, "Whenever Tad is nervous or we have to chastise him, he is sick at his stomach."

A sick stomach had figured in other situations which Tad found unpleasant. During his two days in kindergarten he had been very bashful and unhappy, crying most of the time. On the third morning he was found to have a fever. When, a few days later, his father started to take him back to school, he made signs that he was nauseated. His parents had not, then or later, insisted on his returning. They suspected that it was because he could not talk like the other children that he had been so unhappy there.

As already intimated, the peculiarities of the child's speech were puzzling. How was it that he could say "elephant" (all but the last letter) quite clearly, but couldn't ask by name for ordinary familiar objects about the house? Why, when he could say "Mama" plainly, did he try to gain his mother's attention by meaningless shouts and gestures? He had been known to utter phrases and short sentences—"Oh dear little baby," to his small niece, and "Kitty gone away," after he had been chasing the cat. Yet when his parents tried to teach him words he didn't seem to be able to get them. Was he deaf, they wondered? Certainly he could hear a door slam; yet his mother could call him endlessly, when he was at play, without his appearing to hear her. But, if deaf, how had he contrived to learn the words and phrases he did know?

Despite his handicap, Tad got on fairly well with other children in the neighborhood, at least with those who had known him for some time and were used to his ways. He was said to be quite a favorite with older people round about. He was rather bashful with strangers, perhaps because of his inability to express himself—yet hardly more so than many a normal child. When the clinic visitor was at the house he was constantly in and out of the room, making noises which his mother interpreted as a desire for something to eat or a request for the paste or the scissors. If not understood he would cry in a fretful fashion, rarely making an attempt to formulate his wishes in words.

Despite his backwardness, Tad's parents didn't believe he was a stupid child; he was observant, and remembered what he saw—for instance, the landmarks along certain roads they often took when out driving; and despite his desire to be entertained and waited upon, he was said to be an independent little chap in many ways. He was affectionate, and

after being punished would insist on being kissed and loved. He was fond of dogs and cats and babies, and was always gentle with them.

The ways of measuring a five-year-old's intelligence, none too satisfactory at best, are exceedingly limited where speech is not a usable tool. Tested by a performance scale in common use, Tad was judged to have at least average, probably superior, intelligence. He went at things thoughtfully, concentrated well on each task, and clearly profited by experience. He showed good perceptions of form and space relationships and considerable manual dexterity. His apperceptions, as measured by a well-standardized picture completion test, were up to age. His play activities as observed at the clinic were those of a normal child.

Physical examination proved that Tad's speech difficulty was the natural result of his inability to hear clearly; the sound centers had never been sufficiently impressed to enable him to reproduce what he heard. A specialist who tested him further suggested the possibility of a nerve deafness resulting from the meningitis. He later decided, however, that this was not a true nerve deafness, but that the child's hearing was partially defective on one side, with apparent complete deafness on the other. Just how much Tad actually heard could not be determined; he was very timid, and his inability to express himself made accurate measurement of the defect impossible. Certain nose, throat, and gland conditions were noted but were not considered to be related to the auditory defect, or to require operation or other treatment.

As may be imagined, Tad's parents were immensely relieved to learn that there was every indication of their son's possessing a good intelligence. The assurance that a real defect in hearing explained his speech defect also helped to clear their minds, and in the discussion opened up by the

clinic workers on ways of helping him they proved most open-minded and responsive.

The points first stressed concerned principles of habit training as applicable to a completely normal child as to a handicapped one. Mr. and Mrs. Cooms were of course not blamed for the indulgent ways they had fallen into toward their little invalid, but it was pointed out to them how great was the disadvantage at which the child would be placed if they did not train him to a more normal behavior. At once they accepted the points emphasized: Mr. Cooms went out for a walk while his wife put Tad to bed and left him to go to sleep alone, and after a moderate flow of tears the new order was accepted; Mrs. Cooms hardened her heart to the point of refusing between-meal lunches, and firmly placed her son in his high chair at the table, where presently he was consuming regular meals with fair appetite. The mother even put herself out to provide the youngster with his most substantial meal at noon. His sleep became less restless, and he was reported to have fewer temper tantrums. A more satisfactory response to treatment, or a prompter one, could hardly be hoped for.

The problem of improving Tad's speech was a more difficult one. The possible use of a mechanical device to improve hearing had been suggested by the specialist, but the testing out of this brought no evidence that helpful results would be likely to follow upon its use. The county school for the deaf and the speech correction department of the public schools were visited, and possibilities for boarding Tad near-by, so that he could attend the special classes, were canvassed. As immediate placement did not seem advisable, Tad's big sister was introduced to the kindergartner at the school for the deaf, visited the school, and was instructed in methods of speech training that would prove helpful to her little

brother. These she applied with what were felt to be decidedly good results. The family were also persuaded that they should give up their habit of using, in talking with Tad, his own peculiar system of signs and sounds, that they should cease making a baby of him and should insist more and more upon his saying what he meant in words instead of relying upon his special lingo. The process of weaning themselves and their last baby was not an easy one, but some progress was made and appreciation of the soundness of the principle expressed. Knowing that the child was deaf, they made a point, too, of raising their voices when they spoke to him, and of making sure that he looked at them. They were urged to see to it that he mingled with other children as much as possible, and on equal terms.

That these various measures were in large part responsible for the improvement in Tad's speech which almost immediately began to show, seems evident. Encouraging reports came with nearly every visit. A test by radio was after some time arranged for, and it was evident from the youngster's expression when the receivers were placed on his ears that he heard enough to get pleasure from the musical program that was on the air. During the months he was under observation there may have been some wholly inexplicable improvement in his hearing. This possibility led the specialist, upon re-examination after a six months' interval, to suggest that it might be as well to delay beginning more definite speech work with him until it was seen whether further improvement would occur.

More than a year after contacts with the family had ceased upon the withdrawal of the demonstration clinic, the former clinic worker called up Mrs. Cooms to ask if she might pay her a visit.

The response was cordial. "Tad is so much better, you'll be surprised," said the mother.

And in fact, there was little of the spoiled, fretful, fearful child of two years before to be seen in the active, mischievous youngster of seven who was presently under observation. Still a bit shy, he did not talk directly to the visitor but was full of suggestions for her entertainment. During part of the visit he was actively climbing over his father's chair, wanting to box with him, or indulging in such tricks as blowing out the match with which Mr. Cooms was about to light his pipe. It was evident that the two were great pals. Tad was heard to say a number of new words, not altogether distinctly; but for his gain in speaking, as well as for his development along other lines, it was necessary to depend upon the report freely offered by his beaming relatives.

On the important speech issue, the evidence of improvement was convincing: Tad had gone to kindergarten—in a neighboring school—the year before, and this year had entered the regular first grade. His teacher here had known him for some time and understood him well. He had made such good progress with her that he was to be promoted to the second grade next year; he even helped discipline the children sometimes by seeing that they kept in line. "He does all sorts of things in school, things he will never do for us at home," said the family—and he seemed to have no trouble in making himself understood there. Yet he was clearly stone deaf in his right ear, for if he put the radio phone to this ear, no matter how loud the music being played, he would comment, "All gone bye-bye." And when he had a cold in his head he heard less well in his left ear.

Tad had grown to be very independent this past year, seemed to have lost nearly all his childish fears. He had become quite a "scrapper," fully able to hold his own with

the other boys. He had a bicycle which he had learned to ride in fifteen minutes, and went about freely by himself. He would go to the store on errands, even sometimes to the movies, quite alone. He was very mischievous—nothing tickled him so much as getting a joke on his father, such as loosening the pepper-box top so that his plate was covered by the outpouring, or placing a hot potato in his chair for him to sit on. These pranks didn't bother his father, but "he drives his mother nearly crazy every day." Then, too, the youngster loved to come home and give an exaggerated performance in imitation of some exciting event of the day—such as, recently, the pulling of his tooth by the school nurse. He had himself proposed having this done—in contrast to his former extreme fear at the suggestion of having his teeth touched, which had kept his family from following the clinic's advice to have much needed dental work attended to.

As to temper tantrums—"Since we have been able to reason with him he doesn't have those spells like he used to," said his father. "Maybe once a month he'll have an outburst when something he wants is denied him. I whip him now because I know he can stop if he chooses. They aren't like the unreasonable spells he used to have."

In personality traits Tad was, his mother declared, very much like his father. "Everyone likes him. He has a winning smile and winning ways, just like someone else I know." At this Mr. Cooms smiled broadly and said, "Now she's hitting at me."

So, encircled by the love of a family of sensible, normally well-adjusted people, who are able to take a common-sense attitude toward his difficulties, this little boy, handicapped as he is, seems in a fair way to grow up a healthy, happy human being. Can we picture what his life would have been in the home of Lucile Kohlman—or in that of Leo Kern,

whose story follows this? Or again, what the lives of these essentially normal small persons might have been in his home?

That grave child problems arise even in good homes no reader of guidance clinic records can doubt, no observer of ordinary folks and their ways is likely to question. Few of us, parents or children or non-combatants on the sidelines, can safely claim immunity from error, and serious error. What then distinguishes the hopeful from the relatively if not absolutely hopeless situation, as we find them in the cases of children brought to our clinics?

To this question there may be many answers; yet might it not be possible to boil all these down to two? On the one hand there is, as we all know, the relatively hopeless situation of the child so handicapped mentally or physically that no environment can make him, or could ever have made him, into a normal human being. On the other hand, is there not an equally discouraging situation in which the world of a normal child is ruled by adults either so unintelligent or so twisted, thwarted, and bound down by their own unsolved problems that they are incapable of giving a detached, a fair, a reasonable consideration to the child's?—incapable of controlling themselves in the interest of the child?

As to which of these situations we meet the more frequently, as to which accounts for more of our juvenile delinquents, our adult criminals, our mental wrecks of all ages, there are bound to be differences of opinion among those who work with sufferers and offenders of different ages and types. But that a happy home-life for the child is the surest preventive of harm few will doubt: life in a home where the parents know how to steer a middle course between indulgence and severity, know how to be the playmates and confidants and friends of their children.

"TOO SMART"

There is no panacea for feeble-mindedness. There will always be mentally defective persons in the population of every state and country. All of our experience in dealing with the feeble-minded indicates that if we are adequately to manage the individual defective, we must recognize his condition while he is a child, protect him from evil influences, train and educate him according to his capacity, make him industrially efficient, teach him to acquire correct habits of living, and, when he has reached adult life, continue to give him the friendly help and guidance he needs. These advantages should be accessible to every feeble-minded person in the state. Most important of all, so far as possible, the hereditary class of defectives must not be allowed to perpetuate their decadent stock.

WALTER E. FERNALD, M.D.,

A State Program for the Care of the Mentally Defective.

IN THE clinic waiting room Leo Kern proved such a disturbing element that one of the workers sought to divert him by offering him a flashlight. After mastering its mechanism and thrusting it into various dark corners, Leo was struck by the idea that the inside of his grandmother's mouth would offer a fruitful field for study. Accordingly, a peremptory order was issued, and for fully three minutes the old lady sat, head screwed awry, jaws strained open, while the young explorer minutely examined the interior structure. Upon the slightest accidental movement, she was sharply reprimanded and threatened with an uplifted hand by her tormentor.

It was old Mrs. Kern who had brought Leo to the clinic, begging its help.

"He flies into rages over the least little thing, doctor, and swears and lies—just like his mother—and takes things from the other children—just as his father did at his age. Some-

times he throws things on top of his baby brother as though he wanted to get him out of his sight, though he seems to love him too. But, my God, what can you expect? His mother pets the baby as though it was a doll, she doesn't understand Leo, she screeches at him and smashes him for no reason at all, then she complains to his father when he comes home and he whips him again. His mother can't sew and cook as well as a fourteen-year-old child, she goes to the movies and neglects the home, then my son comes in and is wild when he finds no meals and no housework done, and they quarrel, and if Leo tries to join in they both beat him and send him to bed. My son works very hard, he is nervous, his wife don't know the value of money, she keeps the family poor buying useless cheap things for the house, they couldn't pay for Leo to be sent away, I am not strong enough to take him. Leo is our first grandchild, he is a wonderful child, we can't help feeling different toward him, his mother is jealous for the baby, the way she treats Leo I think she must have an awful hate for him. When she beats him he gets mad and throws things at her—dishes, hot water, knives, forks, anything; he has spells when he is wild and cranky and breaks things up. My darling, darling Leo! If only his mother could be taught to keep a better home for them, and not to punish him so often . . . I pray you do something for him. . . ."

Such, in substance, was the old lady's plea. She was an intelligent old lady; her sons had all disappointed her, not wanting to be educated and marrying women duller than themselves; and now all her hopes and dreams were centered in this first grandson, her idol, her darling. Keen-witted as she was when others were concerned, she could not see through herself. "I don't give Leo his way" she solemnly assured the doctor; "sometimes I hit him."

At home Leo's behavior—and his mother's—was as revealing as these doings and sayings at the clinic. When the worker first called, he opened the door at her knock and instantly recognizing her—they had met when he was with his grandmother—called out "Oh mama, here's my friend!" He wanted to show her all his toys at once, to monopolize the conversation. When she explained that she must talk to his mother first, then would look at his things, he was pacified for a few minutes, but presently returned to the assault with new demands. He thrust himself between the two adults, lavishing affection upon his mother and baby brother, and then for no apparent reason biting the one and pinching the other. He seemed unable to keep still a moment, was constantly seeking for some new form of entertainment.

After trying for a time to disregard his activities, his mother began to threaten him:

"I'll tell your father!"

"Must I get the strap?"

"I'll put you to bed!"

Leo paid no heed.

Presently Mrs. Kern in desperation seized him, carried him into the bedroom, laid him down on the bed and started for the door. He cried vigorously. She turned back and took him up. He clung to her, sobbing and moaning, "Oh you don't love me—you don't love me."

"Of course I love you" said his mother, "Now be good, Leo, mother loves you . . . mother always loves you. . . ."

"Then why do you make me suffer so?" wailed Leo.

Despite these vicissitudes—or because of them—Leo enjoyed the visit, and when the guest started to go objected vigorously.

"I'll be back again, Leo," she told him.

In answer, he darted to the door and turned the key. "No, you can't come back, 'cause you can't go."

The visitor insisted. Whereupon Leo cast himself upon the floor, wailing,

"She don't love me."

His new friend was unperturbed.

"I like to come to see you, Leo," she said, "but I can't stay any longer because there are other places where I must go. I'd like to have you come tell me good-bye, though, if you want to."

Leo jumped up, all smiles, opened the door and kissed her good-bye, admonishing her, with a final unexpected blow of his small fist:

"Be sure to come back."

Constant as had been the interruptions, good progress in getting acquainted with Mrs. Kern had nevertheless been made on this visit. She was a pleasant-faced, friendly young woman in the mid-twenties, with a childishly complaining manner, who impressed the visitor as being just what her mother-in-law had intimated—"not very bright." She evidently welcomed the opportunity to talk over her family difficulties, accepting her visitor without question and displaying no curiosity as to the service she represented. Her point of view was as nearly opposite to that of her mother-in-law as could well be, but putting the stories of the two together, and supplementing them by Mr. Kern's account and by items gleaned from other relatives, it was possible after a little to arrive at a fair understanding of the true situation.

Walter Kern, Leo's father, now twenty-five, had spent a turbulent youth which seemed already to have been left far behind. Dragged through the last year of grammar school by the united efforts of a determined mother and a friendly teacher, he had revolted against further plans for his edu-

cation. He had a taste for mechanics, and when his parents opposed his wishes, feeling such work beneath him, he left home to make his own way in the world. His mother told of early thefts—an express wagon stolen here, a baseball outfit there; and how she had wept over them with the boy and gone with him to return the stolen articles. According to the man's own statements (made much later to the clinic worker) these childish episodes had been but the forerunners of far more serious delinquencies, which had continued through several years of adolescence; work had been irregular and between jobs he had helped himself to whatever he could lay hands on, several times robbing cash registers. Then, before he was out of his teens, he had met and married Sadie Statts, and settled down. Some skill as a mechanic he had picked up, and he was now, with a partner, running a small repair shop which kept him so busy that he was seldom at home until after Leo had been put to bed.

Sadie was also twenty-five. Both her parents were dead, but she had several sisters who were, according to her report, "healthy and fine," with no troubles at all; some of them were married and had equally fine and healthy children. She herself, she said, was the only member of her family who had ever given any trouble. Just what form this "trouble" had taken she did not specify—except that, though she had attended school till she was fourteen, she had never got beyond the fourth or fifth grade.

These two young people had been married six years. Their life together had been far from peaceful, furious quarrels flaring up between them, one cause of which was Sadie's slovenly housekeeping. Three times during their first year, according to the grandmother, had the young husband left his wife, but always—largely through his mother's influence—a reconciliation had followed. They now, with Leo, four-

and-a-half, and Carl, aged six months, occupied the upper half of a small double house in a neat, new row. The neighborhood was pleasant, and the rooms themselves were fitted out with every convenience for the housekeeper and were comfortably furnished. With two attractive little boys and a husband who brought home fair earnings regularly, what was it that the wife and mother lacked to enable her to make a success of her job?

Before we give the clinic's answer to this question, let us listen to the young mother's own story of her difficulties:

"I am nervous all the time, my head hurts, I can't stand the two babies. Leo throws things at me, even when I have baby in my arms; once he tried to kill baby—he covered him with a blanket and danced on his stomach. He cries and yells when I'm doing my best to please him; I can't do anything with him. . . . Grandmother spoils Leo—she takes him bus riding, and to see the animals—she will even skip with him in the street if he makes her. When he comes home he thinks I should do the same, but I can't, I haven't the time. Why, I haven't been out to a show since baby was born. If I could only get rid of the kiddies about twice a week and go to the movies I should be all right. . . . Grandmother always stands between Leo and me: if I tell him to eat something, she tells him not to. She thinks I don't love him the way I do the baby, but I do, I think the same of them both. She tells me the doctor says I am driving Leo crazy, that he ought to be taken away from me; she always brings threatening words when she comes to see us."

Clearly the antagonism between the two women who ruled Leo's world was not all on one side. Clearly, too, his mother, though fond of him, was not much concerned about him except for the fact that he was noisy and troublesome. Even her most earnest complaints of ill-treatment or ill-health

were uttered in a childish, smiling manner which suggested that none of her emotions were very profound.

"I have done my best for him, but he can't be handled and he breaks me down. He gets on my nerves when he asks his foolish questions, and they all think he is so smart. I just get all worked up and don't know how to do anything." And again she reverted to what she felt would be the sovereign remedy: "If you could make Walter stay home two nights a week so I could go to the movies I should be all right."

The husband's talk of home conditions was, in these early days, not very free. He was glad to have the study made, and friendly toward the clinic workers, but rather on the defensive in regard to his wife's inadequacies, saying, "Sadie has not gained up after the new baby yet." He did not think the relatives spoiled his son: "they get along with him fine, and he is always happy with his grandmother." In his opinion, Leo was just "too smart."

"I don't know what to do with him. He always has a cleverer answer than I could think of. The other day I whipped him, and he says, 'Papa, I'm so disgusted with you.' Another time he cried after I punished him and when I told him to shut up, he says, 'You've licked me, now let me cry. If you don't want me to cry, don't lick me.' What could anyone do with a child as smart as he is?"

Though nonplussed by his clever small son, it was evident that the man adored him.

Yet of all his adorers, none was so completely enslaved as the poor old grandmother. Accustomed, as the ablest member of her family group, to the exercise of a natural leadership, she at last, after a quarter century of struggle with a crop of disappointing descendants, had found one who promised to be what she had dreamed of. That he was not

hers, that she could not control his destiny, that she must leave him in incompetent hands—against these bitterly unpalatable truths she was making a last desperate stand. Like many another person of good mentality, her insight was keen except where her own emotions blinded her, as she became an actor in the drama.

Turning from Leo's relatives and their conflicting claims, there are a few points that we need to note regarding the boy himself.

He was, at this time, a rather pale little chap, fairly well nourished and of average weight and height, but with a poorly developed muscular system. His health history began with a normal pregnancy and a difficult birth after prolonged labor, in which instruments were used with resulting slight head injuries. He was breast-fed for nine months and gained rapidly, acquiring teeth and the ability to walk and talk with due promptitude, and in all other respects developing quite normally. By his third year, however, he had evidently begun to have tantrums; several times, in fits of anger at being refused something, he stiffened out and lost consciousness for a minute or two. Since this time his chief health difficulties had been recurrent stomach attacks in which he ran a fever and became quite ill; on these occasions he was usually cared for by his grandmother. At the time of his brother's birth he suffered from a prolonged bout with measles, and was again under the grandmother's care. Despite these illnesses he was said not to be particularly faddy about his food, though he had to be coaxed to eat sometimes and preferred the fried foods his father consumed to things specially prepared for him.

Leo had no bad nervous habits, and had never shown sex curiosity. When he was very small, his grandmother said he had touched himself frequently before going to sleep.

She had told him he must not do this, it would make him sick. After a few reminders he stopped and had since been careful to avoid the practice. Recently, seeing his baby brother touch himself, he ran to his mother crying: "Quick, mama, make brother quit, he'll make himself sick."

Few opportunities to play with other children had come Leo's way. When he did attempt such play he was sure to get into a quarrel. He would fight with children of any size, but was particularly mean about teasing little ones. When he met a child who could beat him he would take his licking as part of the game and not cry. At home he had every sort of toy his adoring relatives could find for him. He tired quickly of each and was forever demanding something new.

Perhaps the most striking characteristic of this youngster was an extreme sensitiveness to the moods and tempers of those about him which he had begun to show at a very early age. When his father came home in a good humor and kissed his mother, Leo would dance up and down crying, "Oh goody, daddy loves mother." When they quarrelled, he would scream and cry and days later he would recount the whole affair in great detail to his grandmother. Once his grandmother became so angry with his mother that she threatened to strike her, whereupon Leo cried out, "Oh Bama dear, don't hit mother. Bama dear, don't." The quarrel came to an abrupt end, but still sensing discord Leo persisted, "Bama dear, kiss mother."

Leo was anxious to go to school, and his harassed mother would have been only too pleased to enter him in kindergarten but had been told at the neighboring public school that he could not be accepted till he was five. In the psychometric tests he was keenly interested, though his restlessness and hyperactivity made him difficult to handle. He showed

himself to be badly spoiled, having to be bribed frequently with promises of more picture games. Once when such a promise was made he remarked with a wise air, "You won't fool me." He even attempted to go a step further by offering to make a deal of his own: "I'll do this if you'll give me that game first." As soon as he had put a puzzle together he wanted to rush off and show it to his grandmother, and when finally permitted thus to exhibit one, he next wanted to take it home. He was, however, entirely reasonable in resigning it when told that other little boys would want to play with it at the clinic.

The test results indicated that Leo possessed high average intelligence. Though the tests for children of preschool age are less well standardized than those for children of six years and over, there is every reason to believe that this small boy is well equipped, mentally, for the battle of life; nor was there unearthed, in the clinic study of him, any other inherent weakness that need jeopardize his success in school or in later life. On the other hand, the indications were only too clear that under present home conditions he was already developing emotional difficulties that might very seriously handicap him in the use of his native equipment.

Obviously, it is with the parents that, under normal conditions, responsibility must rest both for guiding the young child and for providing him with the chart and compass which he must soon begin to use in guiding himself. An outside agency called in to aid in solving a special problem can hardly, unless it conducts a nursery school, hope to exert any great influence directly upon the child. Even with the opportunities for education in habit formation offered by such a school, its managers must rely largely, if they are to achieve permanent results, upon the education of their young pupils'

parents; and any clinic or other agency which has occasional contacts only with its patients must mainly rely on the influence it can thus bring to bear upon those who exert an overwhelmingly predominant influence in these children's lives.

With this conception of its task, it is obviously of first importance that the agency have a clear understanding of the parental material with which it has to work.

What, in the case of Leo Kern's parents, did this understanding involve?

As to the father, such evidence as there was seemed to indicate his possession of normal though by no means high grade intelligence: he had graduated from grammar school, and had proved able to support his family by work requiring some mechanical skill and general adaptability. His parents and brothers were known and likewise appeared normal. Despite his earlier bad record—revealed by himself—he was apparently now a hard-working, decent young fellow. If he was given to outbreaks of ill-temper there was nothing to indicate that there was anything exceptionally violent or brutal about them, and the provocation which called them out was certainly very real.

The mother's record, on the other hand, was dubious. Though American-born she had been, as already noted, unable to progress beyond the fourth or fifth grade in public school. Her conversation and manner, her housekeeping, her generally irresponsible and inconsequential behavior, all alike seemed to indicate a low grade mentality. Little was known of her early life; she herself was a far from reliable source of information, her parents were dead, and the only relative whose address she knew—a sister—appeared quite as simple as Sadie herself and handled her own small boy very much as Leo was handled.

It would have been easy to rest upon the general impression thus gained. Instead, an experiment was tried which it would be interesting to see repeated with many another parent of a problem child. In a long, unhurried interview at the clinic, in which many topics of family history and present interest were covered, enough of the standard intelligence test in most common use was given Mrs. Kern to permit a fair though rough estimate of her mental age to be made. According to this estimate, her intelligence was probably less than that of the average ten-year-old.¹

A few of the answers to specific questions made by this child-woman will perhaps give a better notion of her mental equipment than such a general estimate.

One test consists of three questions which a majority of normal ten-year-olds can comprehend and answer correctly. To the first of these—"What ought you to do if someone asks your opinion about a person you don't know very well?"—Mrs. Kern answered, "States my opinion." To the second—"What ought you to do before undertaking something very important?"—she responded, "Does it when told." To the third—"Why should we judge a person more by his actions than by his words?"—she made no answer.

Another of the ten-year tests requires the subject to perceive and state the absurdity in four out of five sentences—such sentences as "An engineer said that the more cars he had on his train the faster he could go," and "A man said 'I know a road that is down hill all the way to the city and down hill all the way back home.'" Mrs. Kern succeeded with but one of these five sentences. Still another ten-year

¹ The Stanford revision of the Binet test was used. Only one eight-year test was given—the ball and field. This she failed badly. Of five nine-year tests given (all but the weights) she failed two. All the ten-year tests except vocabulary were given, she failed them all. One twelve-year test only was given (definitions), and this she failed.

test calls for the naming of 60 words in three minutes; Mrs. Kern was able to name but twenty. A twelve-year test is passed if the examinee defines correctly three out of five words. Here are the words, with Mrs. Kern's definitions: pity—"help them up"; revenge—"sorry for him"; charity—"poor people"; envy—"cannot tell it"; justice—"they should be fair to you."

With the lack of mental agility and the extremely limited vocabulary indicated by this showing, it is hardly surprising that the intelligent questions of a lively four-year-old seemed to this mother "foolish," that they "got on her nerves." What effect will his correspondingly intelligent questions when he is twice his present age have upon her, one wonders? What effect will the answers he receives from her have upon his mental growth? What sort of guidance will she give him? How will a ten-year-old mother deal with an adolescent son in high school—if, against all the adverse currents of his environment, Leo's native ability should carry him so far?

The alarming extent to which the mentally deficient hand down their handicaps from generation to generation has been increasingly brought to public attention in recent years. How often have we stopped to reflect upon the fate of the normal child born to a feeble-minded parent?

Nevertheless, however unfortunate Leo may have been in his birth, here was the Kern family, a going concern, charged with all the usual parental duties and responsibilities and enjoying all the usual parental rights. At his present age and under existing circumstances, if Leo was to be helped it must be through his elders.

One adjustment outside the home was indeed attempted; and here the clinic worker's first effort was crowned with success. When she visited the school to inquire into the possibilities of kindergarten placement she was told to bring Leo

in at once. She did so, and a very proud and happy little boy began to get up early mornings, to wash and dress and eat his breakfast without urging, all so as to be sure not to miss the beginning of that fascinating session in the big brick building. A grateful mother, too, found her forenoons far easier now that only one youngster mixed himself up with her housework, and her afternoons less disrupted by outbursts of temper, now that her elder son's interests and energies had a chance to express themselves elsewhere. For many months there seemed to be real improvement. Yet within a year habitual tardiness was reported from the school—and as we shall see, home conditions were again as bad as ever.

Earnest effort was also put into leading the grandmother to realize the harm her well-meant interventions in Leo's behalf, her obvious preference for him over his brother, her lavishing of devotion upon him, were doing; and this effort, too, seemed for a time to bear good fruit. The younger Mrs. Kern reported that the elder interfered less, and when Leo made demands upon her would even say, "Ask your mother, if she says it's all right then we can do it"; also that the grandmother was getting fonder of baby Carl so that her preference for Leo was less conspicuous. The older Mrs. Kern, on the other hand, conceded some improvement in the younger; her housekeeping was really not so bad as it had been in her earlier married years, and she gave better care to Carl than she had to Leo at his age. She, still, however, failed badly in her duty toward Leo; she did not cook vegetables for him, or get him outdoors as she should; her only conception of discipline was to scream and hit.

As time wore on it became only too evident that these accusations were well founded. Much time and tact were devoted to getting over to the mother some notion of the

more important principles governing the choice and preparation of foods, to impressing upon her the need of planning her day's work and of employing quieter ways with the children; and these oral explanations were followed up by longhand notes in which, after her visits, the worker restated and reemphasized the chief points made. Sadie (as she wished to be called) readily acceded to all suggestions, was always willing to try out a new diet or regimen, would sometimes even report with enthusiasm on results—but presently would slip back into old ways. Though the clinic workers were much liked by her, and were always warmly welcomed and urged to come again, a year of hard work brought little if any result. She would still shriek at Leo and strike him over the head with anything she might happen to have in her hand, then turn away with a laugh. Once in the midst of an outburst she broke off to exclaim, "God, how I scream, but I do it before I remember"—and later she even reverted, with apologies, to this episode; but usually her memories of her actions seemed hardly longer-lived than the moods which precipitated them, and her memory for new and better ways of doing things was shorter yet. Recently when mother and children were found in dishabille and breakfastless at a late hour—a common predicament—she searched hastily in the ice box for something to give the boys, and triumphantly drawing forth the remains of a tomato and cucumber salad was about to set it before them. Upon the worker's reminder that she had laid in a stock of cereals for breakfast, she climbed upon a chair and after some searching produced an obviously neglected package from the rear of a shelf—while Carl—now a big boy of nearly two—snatched a slice of tomato from the unprotected platter and devoured it.

A few such occurrences, probably typical of many that no outsider has had the chance to observe, go far to explain Leo's

digestive upsets as well as his behavior. What chances of developing either physical or mental health has the child who grows up under such casual, haphazard management? There is, moreover, in the visitor's opinion, a very real danger of injury to Leo from the utterly uncalculating roughness of his mother's spasmodic beatings and whackings about the head.

Sadie Kern's defective intelligence was not the only handicap under which she labored. At a clinic to which she was sent it was learned that she still suffered from serious lacerations received at the time of Leo's birth. The most immediately urgent task thus became that of bringing about the needed operation at the earliest possible moment. In the hope that with the newly discovered physical handicap removed Mrs. Kern might prove less irritable and more responsive to the demands of her domestic situation, the worker labored earnestly to this end. Throughout, Mr. Kern was entirely acquiescent, though too busy to take an active part in making arrangements; but his wife, at first avowing entire willingness, found excuse after excuse for delay, until at last her wish to avoid the ordeal became too apparent to be denied.

Meanwhile other complications arose. That the grandmother's antagonism had broken out again with fresh violence was evidenced not only by young Mrs. Kern's statements but by certain highly enlightening remarks of Leo's. For example, after a tussle with his mother in which she chased him, struck him, screamed and swore at him, he burst out:

"I hate you, my grandmother told me to hate you when you hit me, and I love my grandmother because she is always good to me."

Then, presently, came evidence of a revolt that threatened

the stability of the home as no defiance on the part of a five-year-old youngster could.

Mr. Kern one day telephoned to the worker asking that she come to see him at his place of business: "I'll be certain to be here, I want to see you."

As it had sometimes seemed that the man was rather inclined to avoid conversations of any length, it was with keen interest in the possible significance of this new move that the visitor approached the meeting place.

In the little work-room behind the shop the young man for the first time threw off all restraint and unburdened his mind. For more than two hours he talked, with a desperate earnestness, of his home life and its seemingly unsolvable problems. Several times his voice faltered and his eyes filled with tears, and when he tried to talk of his children's future he broke down completely, burying his face in his arms and sobbing for several minutes. "Oh, God, take care of them if I can't," was his cry.

"You see," he explained, when he recovered himself, "the trouble is, Sadie can't learn anything. I make enough"—he named a respectable sum—"but the money slips through her fingers, we have nothing to show for it, and if there were extra expenses now I'd have to borrow to meet them. A few days ago I went home—no dinner. My wife had taken some friends to the movies and then treated them to ice cream, and when she looked into her purse after they went there was no money to buy food. Since then I give her so much every morning for the day. We don't live like real people. Our holidays are approaching now and other women are baking cakes, but Sadie can't bake; why if I ever ask her to sew a button on my shirt she'd just as soon use black thread as white. She will not get up in the morning to get my breakfast, though I don't leave home till

nine o'clock. If the baby cries I am the one who gets up and gives him his milk. She says she is tired all the time, but I believe it is because she doesn't lead a normal life. If I try to tell her this she gets mad and swears at me. The children are using such bad language that I am ashamed to hear them speak before company. I can't eat, I can't sleep, my mind is not on my work, I feel as though I should go mad. I know that somewhere there is a limit to what I can stand, then what will happen to them?"

There was more back of all this than appeared on the surface. Presently it came out:

"My wife has been receiving 'phone calls from a man who lived across the street last year, and she has met him, too, at a neighbor's, several times. That makes no difference to me, but I know she can't take care of herself and I don't want her coming home pregnant. My life is over except for what pleasure I can get from the children—I don't care how many men she sees . . ." and so on and so on, until the worker felt that a spark of jealousy was forcing the man to try to convince himself, as well as her, that he no longer cared for his wife.

Then he came to the particular point of this interview:

"There is no one my wife will listen to but you. I want you to go to her and tell her that if she doesn't show more interest in the home and the children"—and *in her husband* seemed to stand out, as it were, between the lines—"she may lose all."

Then despair engulfed him again, and in the next breath he was saying,

"But it's no use, nothing can be done because she can't understand. I don't know why, but she's just like a child."

"Don't you feel she has tried harder lately?" the worker asked.

He replied, "Sometimes—but even then the children are abused one minute and petted the next."

Now Mrs. Kern's need of an operation had only recently been brought to light; and it happened, too, that the worker had just learned of another rift in the lute of the young couple's married happiness. Both items she used to the full. All that he had been telling her was true, she conceded; but he must remember that Sadie was actually far from well—and earnestly she urged an immediate operation, which might put her in condition to take a more lively interest in her domestic affairs. Then, as to the man . . .

"The last time I talked with your wife, Mr. Kern, she was afraid you were seeing some other woman, and she was miserable about it. Doesn't that show she's fond of you? And mayn't her belief that you are interested in some one else explain the way she's been acting?"

He answered, "See me as I am in my working clothes—that is the way I leave in the morning and the way I return. If I went calling, I'd certainly put on a decent suit."

The worker agreed to talk with Mrs. Kern, but—

"No amount of talking will do any good, Mr. Kern, unless we all do our utmost to help her. She must be got in better physical condition, and you must assure her, make her believe, that your chief interest is in her and the children, that you want her to stay in the home. If, then, you can show patience, can make her feel you have faith in her, can encourage her to do better, you may all be happier. Yours will have to be the greater part, because you understand the situation. The very fact that your wife is childish and dependent means that she is more easily encouraged or discouraged than you have realized; you could largely guide her by suggestion if you could remember to speak calmly, to avoid stirring up a storm."

To all this Walter Kern agreed, but—

“It is the same thing over and over. Think how long you have been trying to help her. When she starts something new she forgets what she was doing a month ago ”

There was no denying the truth of this. Neither participant in the conversation cherished any illusions; yet they parted agreeing to do their best and to communicate results by telephone.

It was in this interview that the man spoke of his own unhappy boyhood and the delinquencies in which he had been involved during adolescence. Apparently the cause of his unhappiness had been his mother's insistence on his living up to her ideals and carrying out her plans for him. He would never have married Sadie if he had had a home in which he could be happy, he said. He was anxious that his boys should have better home-training, that they should escape the sort of life he had known as a child.

In a long visit with Mrs. Kern soon afterwards the whole domestic situation with the question of the other man as a possible alternative was gone over. She had evidently been childishly flattered by this man's urgent invitation to leave her children and go with him, but she declared that she did not care for him: “He will have to forget me.” Again, after telling how her husband had called the man up and demanded an explanation, she nonchalantly remarked, “But any girl with a good head can care for herself, besides I am going to go straight and he needn't worry.”

The upshot of the interview was a renewed expression of affection for her husband and of good resolutions on the part of the wife; and though there was probably little more depth than usual in these protestations, Mr. Kern was grateful to the worker for having brought about a better frame of mind in her, and seems actually to have utilized the opportunity to

make a fresh start. During the two months that have since elapsed he has played his part more creditably than before, though there has been little enough to encourage him.

With a completely unstable situation like the one outlined, nothing short of a system of daily bulletins could keep one up-to-date. The story of Leo stretches on far into the future, and even if we had all the data that we lack about his antecedents, even if we could trace in advance the history of his parents in their relation to one another, we should still be in the dark as to the outcome of that story. Of only two things can we be certain: no family situation is so desperate that a well-endowed individual may not escape destruction by it; yet no one who so escapes can fail to carry with him, to the end of his life, the scars of old wounds inflicted in those early days. If Leo and Carl are not so warped and twisted by their childish experiences that they, in their turn, exert a warping and twisting influence upon the next generation of children, society will be more fortunate than it has any right to expect.

Clearly, it is not the feeble-minded parent alone who may injure his children. Mrs. Kern, senior, with all her native intelligence, had apparently, through her efforts to find satisfaction by molding her son to her wishes, done him serious harm; she may even, as he stated, be largely responsible for his marriage and thus for the unhappy plight of her favorite grandson. Yet the fact remains that normal parents are educable, that if we can only learn how, we may conceivably in time be able to help them to forestall in themselves the development of attitudes and habits of thinking and feeling likely to wreck their own lives and those of their children. That the feeble-minded too can be taught—within narrow limits—is also true: they can acquire habits

of cleanliness, of faithful plodding work, other habits that will enable them to function usefully in some corner of our modern civilization instead of clogging its wheels. But that they can ever be fitted successfully to play one of the most difficult rôles in that infinitely complex civilization—the rôle of parent—this we may be permitted to doubt.

Child guidance clinics do not, in general, attempt to deal with the problem of feeble-mindedness. For the study and training of definitely deficient children there are, in most advanced communities, a variety of agencies—clinics, special classes in the schools, special institutions—agencies equipped for this particular type of work though never adequate in number to meet all such needs in the community. The case of a married mother who belongs in the high-grade feeble-minded group is however hardly referable to any of these agencies; and when such a mother is found to be the chief source of maladjustment in the case of a normally intelligent child referred to a child guidance clinic, that clinic must ordinarily choose between letting the situation go untreated and attempting treatment itself. If its most earnest and sympathetic efforts fail to produce results which years of training during childhood in a special institutional environment do not always bring about, can we wonder?

How many Sadie Kerns do we know? How many Leos and Carls? What are we going to do with them and their successors on this human stage?

AN ONLY CHILD

A child is not a little man. He is a potential man. He must be allowed to develop rhythmically and in order. His world is not at all the world in which his parents live. His joys are not their joys, and his sorrows are different. He does not see the things they see, he does not feel what they feel, and his thoughts are strange to them.

ANGELO PATRI,
School and Home.

SYLVIA MATTHEWS, an attractive, serious-eyed little girl of not quite four, was entertaining three imaginary playmates by turning somersaults on the lawn, the day the clinic worker called. The imaginary playmates were sitting on real newspapers so that they shouldn't get wet, but Sylvia was barefoot, and actively rolling about in the wet grass.

Sylvia was an only child, and until the family moved to town, a few months before, had never been thrown with other children. Soon after her third birthday she had first mentioned to her mother, quite casually, her friend Clara Make Believe. Her mother received the impression that she and Clara were already old comrades. Later Anabelle Jolly and Roughly were found to be joining in games and listening to stories told by Sylvia. These playmates were never mentioned to the real children whom Sylvia later came to know and with whom she played contentedly when opportunity offered; but they continued to be her companions at home. She often fed them at table, and recently had put on a circus, with herself as chief performer, for their benefit. Roughly, in particular, did all sorts of things which Sylvia's parents wouldn't permit her to do.

Mr. and Mrs. Matthews, who were bringing up their small daughter with the utmost possible care, were too intelligent to be seriously disturbed by this imaginary life of hers, and had never interfered with it in any way. What did disturb them was the persistence in her, despite all their efforts, of certain undesirable habits. She still wet the bed practically every night, even when taken up three times, in spite of the fact that she was given no liquid after four o'clock and was never too warmly covered. At meal-time, though not permitted to eat between meals, she had rather a poor appetite, was extremely slow in eating, and showed a marked dislike for certain kinds of food. For aid in these difficulties a physician of their acquaintance advised them to apply to the child guidance clinic.

Sylvia's mother was in the early thirties, her father nearly twenty years older. Both were highly educated. Mrs. Matthews had been trained abroad; she was a brilliant linguist and had taught for years with notable success. She was in good health, an attractive, alert-appearing woman, evidently superior in intelligence and quite broad-minded. Mr. Matthews was a journalist; he had formerly been on the editorial staff of a leading daily, had resigned because of ill health, and was now doing such free-lance writing as his health permitted. The physician who referred the parents to the clinic called him a "genius." From another source he was reported to be high-strung and hot-tempered. He and Mrs. Matthews were very congenial, the only point upon which they differed being the disciplining of Sylvia.

The child's health history, as narrated by her mother, was without marked misadventure. Her birth and her early development were entirely normal; a mild attack of rickets in her first year, whooping cough and occasional bronchial colds later, had been her only illnesses. The one

striking feature of her up-bringing was the strictness with which she had been called to account, from a very early age, for every infantile fault. As one reviews the story one receives the impression that her parents were demanding that their small daughter conform from infancy to their own adult standards.

Sylvia's mother stated that she and her husband had begun early by punishing the child for little things that she did, because they felt it was less of a "wear and tear on her nerves" to be stopped quickly than to have time taken to reason things out. The child's first recorded whipping occurred at ten months. It was administered because she had "started to stiffen up and have a temper tantrum when something she was playing with was taken from her." There had never been another of these tantrums, a fact which doubtless encouraged her father and mother to feel that they had applied exactly the right remedy.

Training in regard to Sylvia's enuresis—then of frequent daily, as well as nightly, occurrence—had been begun when she was fourteen months old by whipping her. The child had not seemed to understand what this punishment meant, had appeared quite confused by it. After a time, therefore, it had been discontinued. At the age of three it was begun again, but again, seemed to confuse her. Since a prime condition for successful habit formation is that the child should see the reason back of what is demanded of her, and the connection between this and any rewards or penalties, it is not surprising to learn that her enuresis had continued unchecked, so far at least as the nights went; during the day she now seldom wet herself. Mrs. Matthews felt that Sylvia was a good deal repressed on this subject; she was inclined to avoid mention of it, and not to tell her mother when she went to the toilet. Lately they had tried

praising her when she got through the night without accident, and giving rewards. She seemed a little less embarrassed, would speak somewhat more freely of her difficulties.

All sorts of situations which less serious-minded and critical parents, less intent on achieving perfection in their child, would have passed over lightly, had by Mr. and Mrs. Matthews been treated as occasions for discipline. To take a recent example: Sylvia was very fond of being read to and had learned to repeat a number of nursery rhymes. One day she unexpectedly refused to recite a certain one, until then an especial favorite. Her parents tried persuasion, and when this failed her father whipped her. Since then they had never been able to induce her to say the poem. They had tried leading up to the subject in all sorts of ways, but as soon as she realized what they were driving at she would fall silent. That children, like puppies, respond better to the lure of pleasure than to the spur of pain was evidently a point that Sylvia's parents were only now beginning to learn.

Sylvia's poor eating habits were another occasion for whipping. She was fussy about certain kinds of food—though, her mother said, less fussy than was her father. She “first balked on spinach,” as her mother put it. Latterly she had objected even more seriously to meat, unless it was exceedingly fine cut and tender. (Tenderness in meat was something upon which Mr. Matthews insisted.) She had a trick of masticating these foods and stowing them away around her mouth like a squirrel. Once, when whipped into swallowing some food, she had vomited it. Recognizing the purposive element in this performance, the parents had ignored it, and it had never been repeated. Other foods she ate fairly well, but her father particularly found her slowness rather trying, and continually prodded her to induce her to

finish what was on her plate. The meals were well planned; Mrs. Matthews had a good knowledge of nutrition. The parents had found that denying Sylvia desserts was an effective means of discipline.

Aside from her enuresis and eating habits, the chief complaints lodged against Sylvia were that she did not obey quickly enough, and that she was inclined to be evasive. Her father declared that she would lay plans for an excuse sometimes a day ahead, when she was likely to be punished for something. This evasiveness showed more with the father than with her, the mother said; he did not always take the trouble to find out why Sylvia didn't do exactly as she was told, and sometimes, Mrs. Matthews thought, there was confusion in the child's mind as to what was expected of her. The mother, though she had agreed with her husband as to the earlier disciplining of their daughter, felt that she had now arrived at an age when reasons should be given her and matters explained. Evidently she realized the importance of beginning early to lay the basis upon which the child's later judgments should be formed. Apparently, however, she failed to realize that the process might have been begun at an even earlier age; that the parent who wishes a child to develop the habit of thinking things out for himself will do well to begin explaining matters to him even before he is quite able to grasp the explanations. An attitude of mind may carry over even though certain words remain unintelligible.

On the other hand, Sylvia's parents recognized in her a good intellectual ability, and mentioned that she was talkative and friendly and always behaved well before strangers. She was usually cheerful, was self-reliant, and never sulked—although her parents felt she would do this if she had any opportunity or encouragement. Both father and mother

spent much time with her, and the mother was teaching her French.

Mr. Matthews, in the first conversation which the clinic worker had with him, admitted that perhaps his discipline of Sylvia had been a little severe at times, though he did not feel he had ever been cruel to her. He believed he had always acted for the child's own good; if he had made a mistake he could rectify it now. He was interested in learning about the clinic and expressed a desire to cooperate in any way possible. His culture and refinement were evident. He had a pleasant smile.

Mrs. Matthews showed that she possessed an unusual knowledge of mental hygiene and of work with children, yet was far from assuming that she "knew it all." She was eager for suggestions and quick to pick up the few that were dropped in the preliminary interview.

Such were the more significant facts regarding Sylvia and her background known to the workers at the clinic when the little girl made her first appearance there.

Physically, Sylvia was found to be slightly above average height and weight. Her tonsils were small and cryptic and a bit inflamed, but the specialist who examined her throat did not advise an operation at present; her cervical glands were slightly enlarged, her hearing was not quite so good in one ear as in the other. She was knock-kneed, and her posture showed some fatigue. Otherwise, except for a slight cough with accompanying bronchial sounds, and the main trouble, enuresis, the examination was practically negative. Urinalysis revealed nothing significant for treatment.

Sylvia's behavior in the psychological examining room was in marked contrast to that of most children of her age who passed through its doors. She was self-possessed

without being in the least "smart." She entered the office by herself, sat down quietly in the place indicated and entertained herself by playing with some blocks while waiting for the examiner to be at liberty. Her attitude was trustful and friendly, but she was extremely serious, and seldom laughed. In the tests she proved to be of "very superior intelligence," with a mental age fourteen months in advance of her actual age. She was attentive, persistent, deliberate, alert. She thought things out before answering, but her mental processes were so rapid that there was no appreciable delay between questions and answers. Her memory was excellent, and she showed initiative, though no marked curiosity. In fact, she gave evidence of nearly all the desirable mental traits to be looked for in a child of her years, and exhibited scarcely any undesirable ones. She was "the best-behaved youngster for her age that had been seen at the clinic."

Drawn out by the examiner, the child talked freely about her parents, her play interests, and her imaginary playmates.

Both her daddy and her mother were nice to her, she said, and she loved them both. However, her daddy often spanked her hard. "The other day I was naughty and he spanked me, over at my house." She said she was often afraid he would spank her, "And then I think if he only won't I'll be good."

Sylvia declared that she had lots of brothers and sisters; she had always wanted these. Anabelle Jolly and Roughly and several others she spoke of first as make-believe playmates, but later said, "They are all my brothers and sisters." It appeared, however, that all of them had their own fathers and mothers; also that they never got spanked. Anabelle was a big girl, but she didn't know how to turn a somersault until Sylvia showed her. "I have a big brother today. His

name is Felix Fairfax. He never spansks me." She told then about another big brother and his gun, and related how he shot monkeys, spiders, kitties, and dogs. Suddenly she began to tell a story about two little kitties and two little dogs. Asked where they were, she said, "They have gone away, now." When the examiner remarked that she hadn't seen them, Sylvia answered, "No, you were too far away." She had also a make-believe monkey, that laughed. Real monkeys she was afraid of—she often dreamed of them and was frightened—but not of this make-believe monkey. Another frightening dream she had was of spiders. Dreams that didn't frighten her were about playing, and the sandman, and candy bears. Sometimes she dreamed that her father and mother had gone away. She thought she was happy most of the time. When asked what she would ask for if she had three wishes given her, she answered a kitty, playthings, and a horse with a barn and hay.

The child was very alert and observing; she noticed all the pictures on the walls and asked questions about the animals in one of them. When not being questioned she sang to herself. It was evident that she was a very imaginative youngster who had created a group of playmates to fulfill her longing for the companionship of brothers and sisters. Her frequent references to spankings seemed to indicate that the punishments she had received at the hands of her father had profoundly colored her emotional life, even though on the surface she appeared a happy, normal child.

There could be no question but that Sylvia was remarkably well trained. One of the things that made her charming was her complete lack of self-consciousness.

That Sylvia Matthews' problem was somewhat unusual among the problems that come to child guidance clinics,

at least—every one familiar with this field of work will agree. Our typical problem at the preschool stage appears to be that of the spoiled child, disciplined irregularly and inconsistently or not at all. Yet there are enough such over-trained little boys and girls—many of them only children, all of them so peculiarly precious to their parents that their every word and act is watched with solicitude and made the subject of earnest heart-searchings and more or less prayerful efforts at guidance—there are enough of them, we believe, to make a discussion of Sylvia's case worth while.

Indeed, Sylvia herself, as a person, and her parents, as persons, are perhaps more unusual than the problem they jointly represent. The child's intelligence alone—representing an equipment vouchsafed to only one in more than a hundred children—and her imaginative make-up mark her out, as the intellectual and cultural attainments of her father and mother mark them.

It is naturally from parents who have thought and read much, who have kept themselves essentially young—whatever their age—by their open-mindedness and receptivity to new ideas, that the mental hygienists hope most. If occasionally these hopes are disappointed, such was not the case with Mr. and Mrs. Matthews.

As already intimated, certain concrete suggestions had been offered to Sylvia's parents at the time of the clinic worker's first interview with them. The mother had been advised to continue following the directions given by a physician she had consulted some time before, that she train Sylvia to retain her urine as long as possible in the daytime in the hope of establishing an unconscious habit of retaining it when asleep. To Mr. Matthews it was suggested that he pay less attention to Sylvia at meal-time, putting her food

before her but not urging her to eat; while between meals she should, as usual, be allowed nothing. He was much struck by the point, the possibility of such a policy of disregard never seemingly having occurred to him.

A few days after the clinic study Mrs. Matthews was interviewed, and an appointment was made to see her husband.

With both, the physical findings were first taken up. The mother was very sure that hygienic conditions were of the best, with plenty of outdoor play in the sunshine. The father was relieved to learn that the physician did not advise a tonsil operation, which he had some time before been told should be performed immediately, but merely a careful follow-up of lung and throat conditions.

Since Mrs. Matthews was familiar with methods of testing intelligence—had indeed given certain tests herself—the report of the psychological examination was gone over with her more in detail than is usual. Naturally, she was delighted to learn of the fine record made by her little daughter. Mr. Matthews also showed pleasure, but very sensibly commented that he didn't want the child to be a genius or anything of the sort, merely a happy, normal child. He had himself noted the persistency characteristic of Sylvia's attack on things she was given to do, and was pleased that the examiner had likewise been impressed by this trait.

Sylvia's behavior in the various examinations was next taken up, and the remarkable, almost mature poise which all the workers who had been in contact with her felt that the child possessed was dwelt upon. Mrs. Matthews was immensely pleased, saying, "I want to tell you people that I believe her poise to be due to the training she has had almost before she was born." Both she and her husband, she went on to say, had taken the greatest possible pains with Sylvia's training; each of them had certain very undesirable person-

ality traits, and they had done their utmost to stamp out any tendencies in these directions that the child might show. It was evident that both parents had fallen into the habit of identifying themselves with their daughter, and of attributing all sorts of serious adult meanings to even the mildest of infantile failings. In her own childhood, Mrs. Matthews said, she had indulged in temper tantrums that made her the terror of the family. Sylvia, she felt sure, would have had similar tantrums, but her crying had never availed her anything.

Having thus given the parents credit for all the favorable results of their training, the worker moved on to another phase of the subject. Granting the desirability of the poise acquired, might not the severe repressive measures to which Sylvia had been subjected have had effects that more than counterbalanced the gain in self-possession?

Both Mr. and Mrs. Matthews received the suggestion gravely, and admitted having begun recently to question whether something of the sort might not have taken place. On the subject of the father's severity, however, each made substantially the same points; he had never punished the child in anger, had whipped her only when he felt she needed the discipline. His devotion to the child, his earnest endeavor to be just in his dealings with her, were evident. Mrs. Matthews explained, too, that he often played all sorts of games with Sylvia, personating a bear and other wild beasts, and that on these occasions the two were like children together.

The worker listened; then she turned to the clinic report and read portions of it aloud. The account of Sylvia's fantasies, which so transparently represented the fulfillment of childish longings, was a painful shock to both parents: the big brother who never spanked Sylvia, the imaginary play-

mates whose good fortune in never being spanked she so innocently set forth proved far more telling than any argument. Neither father nor mother had realized how the punishments inflicted had overshadowed the child's mind.

The subject of imaginary playmates as a natural expression, in an imaginative child, of the desire for companionship, suggested to Mr. Matthews the closely allied topic of fanciful tales. Sylvia had recently begun to tell rather elaborate ones; for example, that very morning she had told him about a great big dog that didn't bark at her and that let her ride on his back—all quite gravely as though it were true. Why did she make up this particular yarn and others like it, and what should he do about it?

It had already appeared that the child was somewhat afraid of dogs—a state of mind which the parents regarded as quite natural, since her mother had suffered similarly as a child, and still had to nerve herself when a dog came her way. They had been very wisely and gently dealing with the situation, not forcing Sylvia into direct contact with the dreaded animals, but encouraging every sign of interest and setting an example of friendliness to canine neighbors. With this background it was easy to trace the particular yarn in question to the same wish-fulfillment mechanism that had showed so plainly in her creation of the much-desired brothers and sisters. A similar basis was readily found for each of the other tales cited by the father. He was told that from a highly imaginative child like Sylvia some very wonderful stories might be looked for. These need cause no anxiety. Yet it was essential that she find sufficient satisfaction in real life so that she should not be driven to rely too much upon her own imaginings for happiness, for that way lies mental ill-health.

Another question upon which Mr. Matthews wanted ad-

vice was Sylvia's behavior when he himself, or other adults, entered the room where she was. If she happened to be playing on the floor with blocks or other playthings, she would sometimes not look up or speak, even though he had just returned after a day's work, and even though her mother called her attention to his arrival, telling her to run and meet daddy. He was troubled by the resemblance of this behavior to that of certain adults whose bad manners he heartily disapproved.

In reply, it was suggested that a child's play, which to a grown person might appear trivial, was often, to the child at that moment, the most important thing in life. Mr. Matthews laughed, saying probably that was true, and if there was no other issue involved he was relieved and would do nothing about it. Apparently he had been attributing his daughter's action to some quite adult motive; possibly he felt an unacknowledged anxiety lest it indicate a lack of love for himself. It was pointed out that a child with Sylvia's upbringing would not be likely to develop into a bad-mannered woman, and that he was inclined to over-emphasize minor points. Do not adults commonly lay too much stress on manners for manners' sake? He was warned that as Sylvia came to play with children less well-trained than herself she would be likely to pick up various rough tricks that would be displeasing to him, and was urged not to take these too seriously. He said he appreciated the danger, adding, "It is hard for one of my age to be quite as sympathetic as might be with one of Sylvia's age." He realized that he could not rule the little girl forever, and from now on would try dealing with her less drastically, allowing her more freedom.

At this time it was learned from Mrs. Matthews that she had been giving serious thought to the question of providing

companionship for Sylvia. The difficulty had been that she did not like the children in the neighborhood. She however appreciated the danger to a child of isolating her because of fears of one sort or another, and hoped she had found a partial solution to the problem by placing her daughter in a kindergarten at some little distance from the home.

Throughout these interviews both parents had given the closest attention, the father taking detailed notes. It was evident that the points made had been fully grasped and that the putting of them into effect might well be left to this highly intelligent couple.

Two months later Sylvia and her mother were again seen at the clinic. Sylvia in her usual trustful way told how she had been playing this summer with real little girls and boys. Her "other people" had got killed—at least most of them—and didn't come any more. Anabelle Jolly and Roughly and some others went to the monkey-house and got killed, and the monkeys ate them. Sylvia told this tale solemnly, adding that she felt "awful bad"—and then glanced up with a grin of complete understanding of her own fancy and the examiner's interest. She had known how to dispose neatly of supernumeraries who were no longer needed.

Drawn again into talk of her father and mother, she stated that she still loved them just the same. She was no longer afraid of her father, she added, because he was not going to spank her any more. Asked how she knew this, she replied, "My mama says so." She was glad he was not going to punish her any more, because "it hurts when he spanks hard."

Meanwhile in another room Mrs. Matthews had been telling of Sylvia's great improvement, and of the completely changed character of her father's discipline. The child ate

better, showing much less fussiness than she had, and less attention was paid to her when she didn't eat. She often pretended she was an animal of some kind, opening her mouth wide and poking in quite a big mouthful as she announced the name of the particular beast she was representing. Her enuresis too had improved, though it still continued to some extent. Mrs. Matthews proudly declared that she believed she had succeeded in making Sylvia feel completely unembarrassed about this matter; the child showed much pleasure on finding the bed dry in the morning, but no longer appeared repressed and ashamed when it was wet.

Sylvia had been playing happily all summer with the kindergarten children. Her mother knew that most of the old make-believe playmates had vanished, though she had not been told of the catastrophe in the monkey-house. However, a new imaginary playmate, Dorothea, had recently appeared upon the scene, and whenever Sylvia felt like performing she would collect a large imaginary audience.

Her small daughter was less obedient, Mrs. Matthews remarked—adding, with a smile, “I suppose you are glad of that.” Sylvia still obeyed very well, but took a little longer to do it; things were now reasoned out with her.

Mrs. Matthews had been greatly gratified at her husband's whole-hearted and good-tempered acceptance of the clinic's findings and suggestions. He had completely changed his tactics in dealing with Sylvia, although he admitted that it “went against the grain” sometimes. Not only did he no longer whip the child, but he was patient and took time to explain his reasons to her when giving a command.

An interesting point, possibly not unconnected with this change of front, was that Sylvia now ran to meet her father when he came home. They had always played together,

and since the child was freed from her fear of whippings she entered even more whole-heartedly into their games. Mrs. Matthews remarked that she was afraid Sylvia would now like her father better than she did her, for she had never been able to play with the youngster as he did. It is hard, indeed, when parents center all their devotion upon one small person, for them not to be just a bit jealous of each other's standing with her. Frankly acknowledged, such feelings are not likely to grow to alarming proportions.

The mother at this time discussed various questions connected with Sylvia's future, showing keen insight. She felt that her own greatest defect in handling the child was a tendency to push her. "I am very intense about everything I do—if she were to stay with me all the time she'd be a nervous wreck." She was anxious that her daughter should develop along her own lines, in no way subject to her parents' desires. She would like, if possible, not to send her to school for several years, keeping her out-of-doors with other children, occupied with play and with learning about nature.

With this interview active handling of Sylvia's case by the clinic staff ceased. It was understood that it would be taken up again only on request of the parents.

A year and a half later, in a long friendly interview between Mrs. Matthews and the clinic worker, the mother gave her observations and conclusions upon Sylvia's development during the intervening months. Only a few of the more significant points can here be noted.

A full academic year had been spent by Sylvia in an experimental nursery school, while her mother followed a program of study at the State University and her father was abroad on a journalistic mission. In this school Sylvia seemed to lose some of her repressions—at all events she developed

temper tantrums in which she would lie on the floor and scream and kick, or would throw things around, quite like any little girl who hadn't been carefully brought up. However these belonged to a passing phase, were over in a few months. The surprised and hurt expression of a little boy whom she one day kicked when in a rage seemed to make an impression upon her, and this proved to be the last of her outbreaks. In other respects she was well-behaved, for example never touching the belongings of any of the other residents in the boarding house where she and her mother lived, although she had free run. Was this respect for property, her mother wondered, the result of the policy of always providing her with a special drawer for her own possessions?

With the children in general she did not mix well; she would play happily with one at a time, but did not enter readily into group activities. She showed a tendency to pick the more unruly children as companions, and though at times she would spend hours contentedly playing with her dolls, again she would behave like a little roughneck, hiding away to avoid duties, or grabbing goodies out of order. On the whole, her teachers found her a hard child to fit in.

Toward spring, however, an opening occurred that brought her a chance to shine in her own way. As the children rested on their cots after lunch they were permitted to entertain one another with stories. Only one child in Sylvia's group, an older boy, could tell a story well. One day Sylvia told a really good one, a story that had form, about a monkey that lost its tail. After this she told several, and her group relationships became better.

In the world of real children of which she had become a part, there was small need of the imaginary playmates who had been Sylvia's first solution of her problem as an only child; and after the first few weeks they had seldom visited

her. At her age, and cut off from childish companionship as she had been, these youngsters of her invention had served a useful purpose without presenting any serious problem; yet had the craving they so clearly indicated been ignored, their continued activity might in time have come to be evidence of an unwholesome state of affairs in which a world of fancy was presenting greater attractions than the world of reality. Nowadays these old friends came to play with her only when she was ill and confined to the house.

Sylvia's greatest enthusiasm was for babies. When she and her mother visited in a home where there was one, she was perfectly happy, dancing attendance on it all day long. During the preparations for Christmas she solemnly assured her teacher that she must make two presents, one for her mother, one for her baby sister.

Somewhat to her mother's surprise, Sylvia was not regarded, at the school, as a food problem. She was very slow in eating, one of the slowest in the group, but did not refuse to eat things.

The child's enuresis continued throughout the school year. It was made a subject of special study—charts were drawn up, gold stars awarded for dry nights, and all other known devices employed; but at no time did she succeed in going more than two or three weeks without a recurrence. She herself felt very badly, she wanted so much to have a dry bed, but she would say, "I just can't help it, mother."

Since the reestablishment of the home, however, several months had passed without a return of the trouble. Why this was, the mother could not say. A young cousin of hers who had a small baby was sharing the house and Sylvia was supremely happy in playing the rôle of big sister. Recently she had remarked to her mother, "Now that I've got a baby sister the bed *has* to be dry."

Altogether, Sylvia at five and a half was getting to be quite grown up. She had overcome her fear of dogs so completely that even when a large one knocked her down recently there was no recurrence. In the kindergarten which she now attended she was working and entering into group activities better, was beginning to take an interest in doing things with her hands.

Sylvia and her father still played together happily, and she now showed no fear of him—would even sometimes (though she usually minded him well) defy him in fun. He left her management mainly in the mother's hands, though occasionally, when the child would meet a command by a hasty "I won't," he would look at Mrs. Matthews as though to say, "Are you going to let her get away with that?" Mrs. Matthews, however, had learned that if she paid no heed to such small outbursts and gave Sylvia a little time, the child would do as she was told. "Once in a while she will say she doesn't want something that is served her at the table, but we just ignore her and she usually eats it."

The parents had long since given up trying to force their small daughter to recite, and though she sometimes did it spontaneously, never in the nearly two years that had elapsed since she was whipped for refusing to repeat certain verses had those particular ones been reproduced by her. Quite recently, however, Mrs. Matthews one morning heard her saying mother goose rhymes to herself as she lay in bed; and presently along with them came the struggled-over stanza—letter-perfect, as though it had formed part of a much used repertoire.

Thus naturally and simply, one by one, have the difficulties of this little girl slipped from her as she grew. Few even of the best endowed children are perfect and flawless in body and mind; yet however much they need one or another form

of expert care and training, almost equally do they need a certain measure of wholesome inattention. To be the most precious object in the world, to be continually subject to scrutiny and correction, is not always to be most effectively helped to overcome the weaknesses of childhood.

There are few more difficult tasks for devoted and conscientious parents than just this one of cultivating in themselves the ability to keep hands off in many a situation that seems to call loudly for intervention. Yet freedom to grow without too much adult supervision in unessentials may fairly be set down as one of the inalienable rights of the child.

UNWANTED

There can be no doubt on the part of those of us who have occasion to study many instances of family life that where punishment is the only corrective the most unfortunate delinquent trends and mental attitudes are created.

WILLIAM HEALY, M.D., and AUGUSTA F. BRONNER,
Delinquents and Criminals: Their Making and Unmaking.

CHESTER GATES at nine had already spent three months in an institution for delinquent boys on a general charge of incorrigibility which covered a long series of petty thefts at home. Now he had again been brought into the children's court by his father; he had begun to steal, or rather to obtain goods on false pretenses from outsiders, and Mr. Gates was at his wits' end. At this juncture the judge referred him to the child guidance clinic.

The story unfolded by the boy's father and stepmother revealed a home situation which explained much.

The two had been married less than three years. Chester and Helen, the children of Mr. Gates by his first wife, had not immediately joined them, staying on for some months with the paternal grandparents to whom they had been sent during their own mother's last illness, the year before.

The home to which they were finally brought was to all outward appearance an excellent one: a detached cottage which the family were buying, in a pleasant neighborhood. The financial strain of keeping up payments was however great, a fact that reacted upon the problem in various less obvious ways.

Mr. Gates was a well-built, vigorous, intelligent appearing man of thirty-five or so, whose face wore a fairly pleasant

expression. He had gone through high school, he said, had become a telegrapher, had traveled around a good bit and tried various vocational experiments. He was now once more a telegrapher, and was on night duty.

Mrs. Gates was an attractive and intelligent young woman, ten years her husband's junior. She had been married before and had a charming three-year-old daughter who was evidently idolized both by her and by Mr. Gates. She appeared desirous of doing her best for her stepchildren, anxious to avoid the traditional errors of stepmothers. From the account given by her and her husband she appeared the chief sufferer in a situation not of her making.

Mr. Gates' earlier marriage had not been happy. His wife, he said, had been a cold, unaffectionate woman. When Helen, their first child, was about two years old, Mrs. Gates had left home during her husband's absence, borrowing money from a friend, and had gone to another city where she secured a position in a department store. She had not known she was pregnant, and the discovery that she was to have another baby had been most unwelcome. She had clung to her job until forced to enter a hospital, and only with difficulty was persuaded by her husband to return home shortly before Chester's birth. Within a year she again departed, taking the baby with her, and contrived to support herself and him until he was two. Returning once more, she had been for a time, according to her husband, "just perfect." Whether this meant that she was happier, and how long this state of affairs lasted, we are not told. She did not again leave home until some four years later when she entered a tuberculosis sanitarium. There she died in the following year.

What sort of training Chester had received from his mother during the first six years of his life we do not know. Mr.

Gates pictured her as a stern disciplinarian, but Chester himself said she had let him do pretty much as he pleased. Apparently whatever control he had been subject to during these years had been much relaxed when upon her departure for the hospital the children had been sent to their grandparents' home. There they were said to have been utterly spoiled, permitted to have their own way in everything. They had not been prepared for their father's remarriage, which took place within six months of their mother's death, and had come to the newly established home in a frame of mind far from favorable to a happy adjustment.

Mrs. Gates, too, though before the marriage she had expressed pleasure at the prospect of caring for the children, approached the actual ordeal with dread; and from the beginning the reconstructed household had gone awry. Both children resented the authority of their stepmother, and Chester especially defied it at every opportunity. Their father, much in love with his new wife, and doubtless, after his first unhappy matrimonial venture, all the more determined to make a success of the second, took her side, punishing his children severely. Chester, who had an enormous and unappeasable appetite, soon began to help himself to the contents of the pantry and ice box. Cake, cookies, pastry melted away; Mrs. Gates was never sure, when dinner-time came, that she would find what she had counted upon for dessert. One tale told of the boy was that he rose during the night and consumed the greater part of a mince pie; another, that during a period of five days he made away with fifteen pounds of cookies.

As beatings became almost a part of the daily routine, Chester turned to less easily detected means of achieving his ends; he began to help himself from the family pocketbook. The money brought him the food he craved, and some

months elapsed before he was caught. The redoubled punishments ushered in by this event failed to restrain him, and after nearly two years of unavailing struggle Mr. Gates took his son to court and asked for his commitment.

During this first—or, as we may call it in the light of later events, this preliminary period, there is no record of Chester's having stolen from anyone outside his family; though, looking back with suspicions bred of experience, his parents were later disposed to attribute the loss of ten dollars from the pocket of a guest to him. Nor is there a record, save in one solitary instance, of his having spent money for anything but food. On the one exceptional occasion he had purchased a Waterbury watch.

After his return from the institution Chester had got into no trouble for about a month. Then his father began coming to the probation officer with complaints: first, the boy had stolen cake from the pantry shelf, then a jar of jam; next, he was found to have charged over a dollar's worth of sweets at the grocery store to a neighbor for whom he had been running errands. Though he was most severely punished for this act, only a few weeks later a similar unauthorized charge against another neighbor at another store came to light—for three times the earlier amount. It was at this point that the clinic was called upon.

While the problem of Chester's stealing and the lying that accompanied it was the most serious one with which the parents had to deal, they had many other complaints of him and of his sister. Chester was disobedient and impertinent. He was untidy and dirty and did his work badly. He not only had a seemingly abnormal appetite which his parents found it impossible to satisfy, but he was greedy and selfish, not sharing with the other children any sweets that might be given to him. He was quiet, dreamy, listless, liked to be

alone; was fond of sitting still and reading or playing indoor games, but much disinclined to rougher outdoor games, and when forced out to play would merely walk around. He could not be made to concentrate on his home work, was easily discouraged, cried when scolded. Once when he made a great fuss upon being refused a quarter his stepmother asked why he cried so loud. He replied: "Well, maybe Mrs. Jones or Mr. Jones (neighbors) will hear me, and they'll give it to me." He had more than once told his little step-sister that if her mother were dead in a box under the ground they wouldn't have to mind anybody.

Mr. Gates, in talking over his son's problem, admitted his impatience with the boy. It was evident that he was inclined to dwell on the faults of both his children and to blame their own mother, their grandparents—anyone, in short, but himself—for those faults. In her absence, he was even quite ready to admit that the present Mrs. Gates was gravely at fault: she was too restrictive in her discipline, favored her own child too obviously, was jealous of any display of affection on his part for the children and resented his spending any money on them. He was no less free in his criticisms of the schools and health agencies with which he had come in contact, and on the whole gave the impression that he was disposed to see every one else's mistakes more clearly than his own. He was half inclined to favor sending Chester back to Rock Dale (the institution to which he had formerly been committed), but felt the management there had been too lenient with him during his former stay. "He ought to be where he'll get the proper punishment." Another half-formulated plan, to place the boy on a farm where he could work for his board while the father supplied his clothing, also appealed to the man. He would like to arrange a similar farm placement for Helen. He was sure he

could not afford to pay board in a foster home for either child, and neither their grandparents nor any other relative could take them in. That a boy not yet ten and a girl of twelve should work to support themselves apparently seemed to him quite natural. His anxiety to be rid of the burden they represented was obvious.

It was evident, too, that in Mr. Gates' management and planning for his son the idea of punishment was uppermost. When asked if he whipped the boy, he responded: "Do I lick him? I lick the stuffing out of him!" He agreed that the children needed more affection than they were receiving, but in the face of all the difficulties he was absolutely incapable of giving it to them.

Seen at the clinic, Chester appeared a normally attractive youngster. He was fair-haired, with a round head and well-shaped features. He was clean and neatly dressed. A bit shy at first, he talked freely once he was started, was friendly and pleasant.

When the question of what interested him was broached, he at once began to tell of his desire to play. He liked to slide and coast, but owned neither a sled nor a wagon. The only playthings he had were a ball and a few indoor games. He seldom had a chance to play with other boys, as there were few in his neighborhood and he was not allowed to bring anyone home because his father slept in the daytime. All these statements of the boy proved to be true.

As to the home, nothing in the way of work that he did there was ever right; his mother was never satisfied. He got no money for the chores he did, nor any allowance—his mother never gave him or his sister money. Any money he made outside, working for the neighbors, his father put in the bank for him; he didn't know how much he had there. His mother did not often whip him, but constantly com-

plained to his father who whipped him, at her request, for every little thing. His father liked him, and would be all right if his mother would stop telling on him and getting him into trouble. His father liked the baby, though, better than he did him or Helen, and the mother neglected them for her. His father and mother often disagreed; sometimes she would say she was going to pack up her things and get out.

The boy readily acknowledged his stealing, telling of how he charged bananas, doughnuts, apples, and so forth to various neighbors' accounts. He did it because he was hungry, he said; and no other explanation could be got from him, though he acknowledged that there was plenty of food at home. He had known other boys who stole, but had never been with them when they did it, nor could it be ascertained that he had been influenced by them. He was troubled by no worries over sex practices or images. He hadn't disliked Rock Dale; had enough to eat there, and "it wasn't so awfully bad."

School he liked. Some subjects—history and geography, for example—he liked better than others, but he had no special dislikes. Except for one who had been cross and partial, he had liked all his teachers, and he got on well with the boys and girls. He thought he would be a geologist when he grew up; one of the teachers in the school had told him about rocks and fossils. If he couldn't be that, he might be a telegrapher like his father.

If Chester liked school, no less did the school people who knew him like Chester. Neither the principal nor any of the three teachers in whose classes he had been in recent years had an ill word to say of the boy. His conduct had been uniformly good, his work at least average. His teachers mentioned various good points in him: he was neither embarrassed nor bold, was always ready to recite, always had

something to say when called on; the only weakness mentioned—and that by a teacher in whose class he had been two years before—was a tendency to dreaminess and listlessness, so that he had sometimes been difficult to rouse.

Several of the teachers spoke of the way in which Mr. Gates had come to school to complain of his son's excessive appetite and of his stealing; he had warned them to watch Chester carefully, as he was a bad boy at home. As they had never noticed anything amiss with the youngster, these complaints had apparently rather increased their liking for him. One teacher was emphatic in saying that she considered the father entirely at fault; she believed he had no sympathy for the boy and was much too hard on him.

The report from the staff at Rock Dale, where Chester had recently spent three months, was less clear-cut, but on the whole was favorable. At first, the boy had been "as wild and disobedient as a hare"; he stole food and various small articles from the other boys' lockers, and was shiftless about his work. However, he "readily responded to the home environment of Rock Dale," and "easily acquired our habits. . . . He is a well-worth-while boy."

From a neighbor who was interested in Chester and had given him numerous small jobs for which she paid him, came other side lights on the situation. She had encouraged the boy to save money to buy a sled and skates. To her dismay, after he had been working for some time with this end in view, his parents decided that the money saved should be spent on clothing. This seemed to her an almost tragic error, and the mistaken policy of which it was the latest manifestation she regarded as mainly responsible for Chester's stealing. She had found the boy likable, very responsive and affectionate.

If Chester was more favorably judged by every one else than by his parents, still more strikingly was this true of his

sister Helen. By her stepmother she was said to be stubborn, saucy, and shiftless about housework; by the teacher who knew her best she was described as a sweet, lovable girl, interested in her work, who never needed correction. She was doing well in junior high, and was warmly liked there. She was believed to have the ability to go through high school and possibly, if given the opportunity, through college.

Both Chester and Helen were said by the parents to be great readers, and given to day-dreaming; characteristics regarded by Mr. Gates as objectionable, and accounted for by him as an inheritance from their mother. If such tendencies were any more pronounced in these children than in hosts of other quite normal youngsters—and we have no proof that they were—the unhappy home situation would be enough to account for the exaggeration. When real life offers inadequate satisfactions and positive unhappiness, escape into the world of fantasy is likely to present irresistible allurements, with resulting lack of concentration upon studies and other tasks, and absorption in books to the neglect of practical activities. Of all methods that could be devised to deal with such tendencies, constant grilling criticism and the commandeering of the child's earnings for routine uses are perhaps the least promising. Only some definite counter-attraction would have power to draw his center of interest back from an unreal to a real world.

From several other sources of information, additional facts and fresh points of view were gathered, which served to broaden and deepen the understanding of the family situation gradually being acquired by the clinic from its contacts with parents and children.

One of these sources was a girlhood intimate of the first Mrs. Gates, a woman who held a responsible position in the community and appeared to be a reliable witness. Her

report gave a very different impression from that produced by Mr. Gates' story. The children's mother had been, she said, a sweet, gentle, retiring girl. She had gone through high school and had shown some artistic talent. She had been much in love with her husband when she married him, but had found him high-tempered, nervous, and excitable. He had made certain excessive demands upon her which had evidently had much to do with her determination to leave him.

Owing to the fact that she did not know she was pregnant before her first abandonment of the home, Mr. Gates had often, it was learned from this old friend, questioned the paternity of Chester. The fact that a former admirer of his wife's had lived in the city in which she found work had strengthened his suspicions, though careful inquiry had brought no evidence that the two had met during Mrs. Gates' stay there.

As to Mr. Gates himself, this same friend stated that he had always felt that no one understood him, that the entire world was wrong and he himself the only person who was exactly right. He had considered himself superior to his own family, to his wife's family, and to his wife. A remark of his to the clinic worker, that he supposed marriage was always disagreeable until the wife was trained, neatly illustrated his attitude, while various characteristics of his already commented upon fit into the picture.

Regarding the earlier life of the second Mrs. Gates and her present point of view, something was also learned, partly from apparently reliable outside sources, partly from herself. She had been, it appeared, much coddled and waited upon by a very devoted mother, who had seen to it that she had the best of everything, even when the family could ill afford to supply it. Her first marriage had been happy, and

she constantly looked back to it and felt that her second had been a mistake. Though she had tried to make friends with her stepchildren, she apparently had small understanding of or ability to manage children, even her own. She was jealous of every sign of affection shown by Mr. Gates for his children, and resented every expenditure of money on them. She felt the reputation Chester had made for himself in the neighborhood as a personal disgrace. She had been more than once on the point of abandoning the struggle and going home to her parents, but had been restrained by the fact that she had invested several thousand dollars in the home and by her reluctance publicly to admit her mistake.

To these two adults, themselves so childish in many ways, had fallen the task of understanding and guiding a pair of unhappy and antagonistic youngsters. Small wonder that they had failed. The woman who is still ruled by a spoiled little girl within her, the man who feels himself an exceptional being, who must still, in small boy fashion, assert himself by bluster and bluff, who invariably, whatever the difficulty, traces the fault to some one else—these are hardly emotionally mature individuals. And for the task of rearing children wisely, emotional maturity is as essential as normal mentality.

The clinic study of Chester brought to light two sets of facts which needed to be taken account of in any future planning for him.

As is the case with many ill-adjusted, unhappy children who come to child guidance clinics, the boy appeared in the psychological examination to be brighter than any one who knew him had realized. While, despite many changes, he was well advanced in school for his age—in the fifth grade—and doing what was described as “good” or “average” work,

no one had picked him out as unusual; whereas, according to the tests, he was two-and-one-half years in advance of his age in general intelligence, which meant that he ranked among the ablest two per cent of school children. He showed special maturity in reasoning, and in tests of mechanical aptitude was exceeded by less than fifty per cent of fifteen-year-old boys and by a much smaller proportion of boys from twelve to fifteen. In reading and arithmetic he showed himself less advanced, but capable of doing work of the next higher grade. He was interested, worked well, was friendly and polite. A tendency to be over-quick in his responses, apparently due to impulsiveness, was the only weakness he displayed.

With such evidence as to superior mental equipment, it was easy to surmise that if the boy could be given a fair chance, satisfactions gained through success in intellectual pursuits might in the long run do much to compensate for dissatisfactions in other lines. Under present conditions, however, he was clearly not free to make the best use of his powers, and school adjustment that would permit rapid advancement or offer an enriched curriculum was not the urgent need.

Physically, Chester was well-grown and well-nourished; he was two inches taller than the average boy of his age, was of normal weight for his height, and carried himself well. However, his abnormal appetite, and the fact that his excessive eating had not resulted in overweight, taken with a variety of physical signs, raised certain questions which only a series of laboratory tests could answer. A first duty of the clinic was therefore to lead the father to see that physical conditions might be partly responsible for the behavior complained of, and to persuade him to place the boy in a hospital for the necessary tests.

No less vitally important was it to make the man realize the good potentialities of his son, and the way in which the repressive treatment to which he was being subjected and the lack of any normal love-life were nullifying these potentialities. The boy's need of affection, of encouragement, of freer outlets for his play-interests—more companionship, more playthings, some spending money; his need of the best educational opportunities offered by the city schools, and hence the inadvisability of placing him on a farm to work for his keep: if the father could be made to realize these, there might be hope of transforming his attitude. Equally important was it to bring about such a change in the attitude of the stepmother. An adjustment in Chester's own home was clearly the thing to work for; failing that, a foster home placement that would give him an opportunity to develop his natural powers was the next best solution to be sought.

In the course of half-a-year's struggle to put across this simple, common sense program the clinic workers saw much of Mr. and Mrs. Gates, and gained many new insights into the workings of their minds and their methods of handling the children. This knowledge went far toward explaining the very meager results issuing from these months of effort.

Comparatively little difficulty was encountered at the outset in persuading the father to place his son in a hospital for the series of tests recommended. The findings, however, were in the main negative. A suspicion of possible developing diabetes, and indecisive results in another test due to defective apparatus, led to the recommendation that the study be repeated in the near future. Though the situation was carefully gone over with Mr. Gates by the hospital physician in charge, the man was not satisfied and was later heard to complain that nothing had been accomplished.

Pressure of more urgent cases at the hospital made necessary repeated postponements of the date of admittance for reexamination, and with these delays the parental irritation increased and medical red tape was denounced. In the end, when an appointment was made Mrs. Gates refused to let Chester keep it, saying that the doctors had made her wait, so she would make them wait now. Thus six months passed without settlement of the questions at issue. Neither parent had at any time shown much real interest in the suggestion of a possible health issue, and Mrs. Gates during the period of waiting had once declared that Chester's appetite had diminished to a point where it no longer seemed to her abnormal. We may perhaps question whether, in point of fact, it had ever been so.

During these months Chester had at first seemed to do better, then had relapsed and perpetrated several dishonest acts. One of these was the theft of a purse from the principal's desk.

This renewal of misconduct led to fresh reprisals on the parents' part. To force the boy to confess, he was kept in his room without food from Friday to Sunday; again, for the same purpose he was made to stand in the middle of the room with his arms above his head. Some confessions were thus wrung from him, but in regard to other suspected misdeeds he never did admit his guilt.

Mrs. Gates at this time was not in good health and was in a state of great depression and emotional upheaval; she wept, threatened suicide, declared she was disgraced for life. She was especially bitter because the money extracted by Chester from the family pocketbook and required to make good outside losses would have purchased much needed clothing for her. She talked of the money she had put into the home; this financial complication and the circumstance

that her family had disapproved of the marriage made the turn events had taken all the more intolerable. She harked back to her first happy marriage and felt she was being punished for having forgotten her dead husband in a second matrimonial venture.

The conclusion reached by Chester's father as the result of his experience with his son was that the only power that could control the boy was fear. He talked of the deterrent effects that a few nights in jail would have. The fact that an allowance of ten cents a week had been granted to Chester just before his most recent offense he held to demonstrate the uselessness of milder methods and the mistaken attitude of the clinic generally. That his own violent methods had been tried over a much longer period and found wanting did not lead him to similar conclusions regarding them; as usual, every one was wrong but himself.

It is an interesting fact that the principal whose purse had been stolen continued, despite this fact, to see good in her pupil and did not wish any action taken against him. She had felt sorry for him recently because he had looked so gaunt and haggard and unhappy, had wanted to feed him but dared not lest she offend his parents. His probation officer also was sympathetic; though there was no question but that Chester had violated the conditions of his probation, she had on so many previous occasions felt that Mr. Gates was making much of trifling issues that she was disposed still to be lenient with the boy.

By this time Mr. Gates had reached the conclusion that he wanted to keep Chester at home. At first, when the superior educational advantages of the city had been urged as a reason for keeping the boy there, he had scoffed, declaring the country schools to be vastly better. Now he offered this very argument in his plea to the court to be permitted

to retain the custody of his son. It would be pleasant to believe that he had come to feel a new pride and interest in the boy, a new desire to help him make the best possible start in life. As a matter of fact, the discovery that a farm placement without payment for board was an impossibility probably had more to do with his decision.

At last accounts no new outbreaks of stealing on Chester's part had occurred for several months; but there was not the slightest reason to hope that in case one did occur any different type of handling would be given the boy as a result of the clinic's efforts.

Chester's story to date offers an opening for the ever-renewed debate between those who regard heredity as the determining force in human lives and those who believe environment to be a more important influence. One of the boy's grandparents is said to have been an unstable individual addicted to drink and irresponsible in family relationships; concerning a second nothing is known except that she was married to the first and died of tuberculosis; the other two were still living and so far as known were maintaining a normal home (they lived at a distance and were never visited). As to more remote ancestors of possibly dubious repute we know nothing—which is neither more nor less than we know about the forebears of most of our trusted associates. The precise significance of one such blot on the 'scutcheon for any youngster of ten none of us is wise enough to figure out. Turning then from unprofitable speculations to known facts such as are frequently encountered in studies of young delinquents, what of significance do we find in this boy's history to date?

That the circumstances of his start in life were unfortunate seems clear. We have no reliable account of his physi-

cal condition during the first years, his father merely stating in general terms that he was a good baby, placid and cheerful. What we do know is that he was an unwanted child who proved the link that drew an unhappy mother back to a husband for whom she evidently felt a strong aversion; that this husband entertained doubts of his wife's fidelity and his son's paternity which he seems in time to have more or less repressed, but which probably colored his attitude toward the boy, leading him to take an unconscious revenge for the suspected injury to himself. The early training of the child was probably defective owing to parental discord, the mother's conflicting duties as a worker, her ill health, and the succeeding grandparental régime of indulgence; he was not prepared to accept his stepmother gladly, and speedily developed a feeling of dislike for her and for her child, both of whom he felt to be preferred to himself. These facts lie on the surface. Just how much in excess of the normal the boy's appetite actually was we cannot say, but it seems clear that the effort to satisfy it led to his first serious difficulties in the home. If a less sternly repressive attitude had been taken by the parents in the effort to put a stop to these first pilferings in the pantry, would Chester have taken the next step of helping himself to cash? We cannot know; yet each further refinement in the technique of thieving seems to have been made after the boy's earlier and clumsier efforts to find satisfaction had been detected and blocked by severe punishment; and nowhere in the account given by parents, children, or detached observers do we find trace of any handling of the situation by his elders which would tend to substitute sympathetic understanding for antagonism.

Again, while Chester's stealing seems more clearly motivated than that of many small boys, we must not make the mistake of assuming that the desire to satisfy a physical

appetite was all that lay behind it. Nowhere do we get the impression that there was in this boy any unusual drive for attention, while the report of his behavior at school would indicate a notably good balance between this tendency and its opposite. Yet can we be sure that in a home which was so little his that he hardly seemed to belong at all, there may not have been for him an obscure satisfaction in becoming the center even of an intensely disapproving interest? Can we be sure that the discovery of his power to make his step-mother as acutely unhappy as ever she had made him may not have had its charm for him?

These, however, are speculative questions. What we can be fairly certain of is that in a setting which offers neither love, nor reasonable freedom, nor healthful companionship and play outlets, the chances of a happy ending to such a story as Chester's are at a minimum. The child always knows when he is not liked, no matter what people try to convey; and seldom is an unliked child fairly treated. The broken home, the patched-up home—these are the breeding spots for discontents and grudges which too often develop into a life-long rancor against fate and rebellion against all authority. From homes in which there were such "defective family relationships" came well over half of the young delinquents studied by Dr. Cyril Burt;¹ and no one who has worked with problem children has failed to note the disastrous effect of such insecure foundations upon the growing boy or girl.

¹ Cyril Burt, *The Young Delinquent*, page 92.

BEING GOOD FOR TWO

The immensity of a child's misery is almost boundless, for the child has no perspective, the present blots out all the rest of life.

JOHN VAN DRUTEN (author of *Young Woodley*),
in the *New York Herald Tribune*, Dec. 27, 1925.

NORA NELSON, aged nine, had been stealing again, and her mother had rushed to the clinic to unburden herself of this fresh trouble. This time it was two dollars belonging to her aunt that she had taken. "She didn't admit it till I threatened to burn her fingers with a lighted candle. Then I told her to put on her things and get out. She did put them on and was starting off, but of course I had to call her back—the police would take her up and she'd have to go to court and the family would be disgraced. No, I don't love her, I hate her and I've told her so—she's been a curse to me from the beginning. Nobody in the family likes her or trusts her—I have to keep the bureau drawers and the ice box locked. I'm going to put her away this very day."

It was not the first time this threat had been uttered by Mrs. Nelson. Indeed, to the supervisor, Miss Archer, who sat quietly waiting her chance while the young mother poured out her rage and despair, there was little that was new in the tumbling sentences. For two years past the clinic workers directed by her had been endeavoring to help Mrs. Nelson to a saner attitude toward her daughter's behavior. For months at a time they had seemed to succeed—then would come a relapse. If, looking backward,

Miss Archer had concluded that the struggle was useless, who of us could blame her?

Before we can appreciate what she did conclude, and what action she took on the basis of that conclusion, it will be necessary for us to familiarize ourselves with a few of the many facts regarding Mrs. Nelson and Nora that were known to her.

Nora's case had been referred by a society which had made the acquaintance of her mother before the child's birth. Though only seven and a half at the time of reference Nora already had the reputation of being an habitual liar and thief. As reported by her mother, her first dereliction had been helping herself to condensed cream and sugar. At five she had taken ten cents from another child at the church school she attended, and had been expelled after refusing to confess to the priest. He had thought sending her home might lead her to realize the seriousness of what she had done, but she had not seemed to mind in the least, had in fact appeared to enjoy the vacation. Ever since that time she had been helping herself at intervals to cash left about the house, and short-changing her mother when sent on errands, quite undeterred by the scoldings, whippings, and threats with which each new misdeed had been greeted. Nora needed to be punished and frightened, her mother declared—and in the next breath would assert that punishing did no good, for the child would be laughing and happy a few minutes later. If severe discipline was still persisted in, then, it was rather because Mrs. Nelson had been unable to evolve any better way of dealing with the recurrent situation than because she cherished hope of reforming her daughter by this method. Incidentally, Nora had never been given an allowance.

For one so deeply involved in iniquity, Nora at seven

certainly did present, to her new friends at the clinic, a light-hearted aspect. Bright-eyed, healthy-appearing, bubbling over with life and energy, very friendly and chatty—so she appeared to each worker who talked with her. The moment she was questioned about her conduct, however, she became silent; and silence, total and absolute, persisted until the subject was changed. Then, in a little while, she would be herself again.

The picture of Nora drawn by her teacher, at this time, differed in a number of points from that sketched above. Nora was inattentive and often seemed preoccupied in school, sat much of the time staring into space; what she was preoccupied about the teacher couldn't imagine. She was one of the dullest children in the class; was quiet, had few friends. She was disobedient in an obstinate way, would not mind no matter how often she was told to do a thing. She was not in the habit of stealing at school.

Nora was one of seventy children in the lower second grade. This was the third church school she had attended; and she had missed one promotion. That her poor school record was not due to subnormal intelligence was indicated by her average—albeit low average—performance in the psychometric tests given her at the clinic.

Evidently to understand Nora and her mother we need to know about their early lives.

Carline Thomas—now Mrs. Nelson—had been one of four daughters in a wretchedly poor, over-crowded home where there was sometimes not enough to eat and never any freedom or pocket-money or fun. She shared a bed with her three sisters, and wore their cast-off clothes; as soon as she could earn a few dollars a week caring for babies after school she turned over every cent to her mother; she was not permitted to go out in the evening with other young people;

no explanations about the origin or conduct of life were ever given her. By the time she was eleven her mother was finding her unmanageable. At thirteen she left school—in the third grade—and went to work; and at sixteen—her father having died and her mother remarried—she found herself “on her own,” without ever having had any experience in managing herself or her income. That year she was charged with incorrigibility and put on probation; the next she was sent to the city hospital with gonorrhea, and gave birth to a child which died. For a time it would appear that the girl’s sex life was more or less promiscuous. Two of her three sisters were leading, or had led, equally irregular lives; only the eldest had married and settled down.

After a time, Carline went to housekeeping with a man and passed as his wife. He was an uneducated, ignorant chap—an unskilled laborer. When he knew that a child was to be born he wanted Carline to get rid of it, and upon her refusal “would have nothing more to do with her.” However, she evidently continued to see him from time to time, for she tells of his bringing a message from her mother, after Nora’s birth, advising that she smother the baby. By this time the protective society already mentioned had undertaken to help Carline. Nora was boarded out, first with a wet nurse, then with a second and a third foster-mother. Carline lived with her mother, worked, and visited the baby.

When Nora was two Mr. Nelson met Carline and began to pay her suit. He was a bachelor, twenty years her senior, well established in life as a trusted clerk in an old firm, and of decidedly superior social status to Carline’s family. When he pressed her to marry him she told him of Nora and explained that she would not accept him unless she could have the child with her. He was undeterred, remarking that he had been “no angel himself”; he promised to give Nora a

home, and (so his wife later declared) to adopt her. The marriage took place, and after a wedding journey Carline found herself the mistress of a flat with the bewilderingly complex job of managing it and an income of quite unprecedented proportions. At the same time she undertook to bring up her little daughter, now nearly three, who had been promptly brought home.

One element in this situation not appreciated by either Mr. or Mrs. Nelson was the mental equipment which the young wife brought to her domestic task. During the period when she was under the care of the protective society she had been given a psychometric test, the result of which indicated that she was definitely feeble-minded. Her family background, which included drunkenness, tuberculosis, and attempted suicide on her father's side and a record of sex irregularities on her mother's, taken with her life history up to that time, furnished no basis for doubting this diagnosis. It surprised none of her social worker friends, therefore, when she showed herself, at the outset of her married life, utterly unable to cope with her household duties.

Yet by the time the clinic came to know her, a great transformation had taken place: Mrs. Nelson had become an excellent housekeeper. Not only were her rooms clean and orderly, her two children were well and neatly dressed and remarkably well fed, with attention to balance in diet. Somehow, probably by one of the agencies interested in her welfare, Mrs. Nelson had been introduced to household budgeting, had learned how to buy and cook and manage. The learning had taken her four years, she said, and she had often been so discouraged that she had cried over the "darned thing." But she had triumphed. Visitors to her home almost invariably commented upon its attractive and well-kept appearance. Was it possible that she had failed to do

herself justice in the tests, perhaps owing to an upset emotional state; or that there had been an error in the reckoning? These questions could not be answered, and though the possibility of another test was considered it was never made. That Mrs. Nelson's intelligence was below average could hardly be doubted; yet the evidence was curiously conflicting.

It was in her management of her children that the young woman showed at her weakest; or rather, in her management of Nora—for the small son born to her since her marriage had not thus far been a source of trouble. Her violent punishments and beratings of her daughter had, as already related, been persisted in for years, and while she acknowledged the ineffectiveness of these measures she seemed unable to conceive of any others. The child's stealing threw her into paroxysms of rage. She couldn't understand why Nora behaved so—she herself had never stolen. In her desperation she called the child names, accused her, on one occasion, of having "a filthy mind," on another, of being so bad no one could teach her anything worse—though the stealing and its accompanying defensive lying formed, by her own statement, the only serious problem the child presented. To wring confessions from Nora she had been known to threaten to stab her with a fork, as well as to burn her with a candle; and on one occasion she had declared to a clinic worker, "I'd like to kill her and get her out of the way."

Yet these extreme expressions do not, after all, convey a wholly just impression of the general tenor of this mother's methods of child-rearing. On certain issues frequently mismanaged by more intelligent parents she showed remarkably good sense. For example, she was careful to treat her two children with even-handed justice so far as gifts and good times went; when either one had new clothes or a birthday

party or any special attention, she took pains to provide the other with some equivalent; and neither she nor her husband ever failed to give exactly similar sums to the two for deposit in their bank accounts. So striking was her good management in such matters that the psychiatrist at the clinic commented, after one of his talks with her, on the remarkable insight she showed and the many good ideas on child care she held, for a woman of her obviously low mentality: "She apparently tries her utmost to show no favoritism with the children." During the periods when Nora refrained from stealing, the mother often gave favorable reports of her. It was the issue of dishonesty which the woman could not face.

Mr. Nelson's attitude toward Nora and his share in the up-bringing of the children were naturally important points. According to his wife's first report, he was very fond of Nora, meant to bring her up as his own child, and, as one mark of his interest, had arranged for her to take music lessons—he was himself a lover of music. Nora believed him to be her own father, and he was as careful as his wife to refrain from favoring their son.

Seen at the clinic, the man was disposed to make light of the child's stealing, remarking that he thought most of the children in the neighborhood stole or lied more or less and that things would right themselves. He declared himself, in general, indifferent to children—he considered it was the woman's business to bring them up. Apparently he was easy-going with the two in his own home—he said he let them "maul" him as his wife never did. She was excitable—"anything sends her up in the air." Evidently he himself was not disposed to grow excited about the misdeeds of a seven-year-old.

Two years, however, make a difference—especially two years marked by such backslidings as those from seven to

nine were for Nora Nelson. Twice the child had ceased her stealing for periods of several months, only to relapse. Earnest as had been the efforts of the clinic workers, and friendly as had been the relations they had established with the child's mother, no permanent alteration in her methods of managing her daughter had been effected. She had indeed fallen into the habit of making many comparisons unfavorable to the child between her and her younger brother, though she still prided herself on showing no favoritism; she had more and more refused to let Nora go to the nearby playground and withheld her from mingling with the neighborhood children on the ground that she was not to be trusted. At the time of the clinic visit recorded at the beginning of this narrative, one of the chief causes for Mrs. Nelson's despair was the displeasure expressed by her husband over Nora's continued misconduct, and her fear that he would refuse to keep the child in the home.

This theme she proceeded to elaborate. Mr. Nelson had never wanted Nora, she now admitted; though he had promised before their marriage to receive the child, he had only with great difficulty been persuaded to keep his word, and the mother had ever since felt that Nora was a member of the family circle by sufferance only. Each fresh misdeed of the child's, therefore, was a threat against the security of the home—that almost miraculous security, beyond anything the harassed young woman had ever believed could be hers. It wasn't fair to Mr. Nelson, either, to bring such disgrace upon him. Things simply couldn't go on as they were going!

While Mrs. Nelson's desperation might seem sufficiently accounted for by anxieties as to the situation in her present household, an older and deeper anxiety actually contributed to it. She had so hoped that Nora would grow up a daughter

to be proud of, thus justifying her, the mother, in the eyes of all the relatives who had scorned her, saying, "Carline's no good—she had Nora before she was married." Nora, in other words, was to be virtuous for two—a delinquent mother and herself. A heavy burden, indeed, for one small girl to carry.

On this particular February afternoon, Miss Archer had let her visitor talk herself out, had shown that she fully understood all the difficulties of Mrs. Nelson's position. Then, very gently, she began to review the points in the history of mother and daughter which showed how much Mrs. Nelson really cared for Nora: her rejection of those early urgings that she have an abortion performed, that she smother the baby; the way she had worked for and visited the child during the first few years; her refusal to consider Mr. Nelson's offer of marriage unless she could have Nora with her; and all her later efforts to bring the child up, to stand between her and harm. Mrs. Nelson softened visibly during this recital, admitted, at length, that of course she did really love Nora.

Then came the question—but did Nora know she loved her? Mrs. Nelson was surprised that there could be a doubt as to this; how could the child help knowing it? She was reminded how only a little while ago she had been asserting her lack of love, her hatred, even, for Nora; in her efforts to make her daughter a good girl had she not lost sight of the child's need to be able to count upon one person absolutely? To Nora, of course, her mother was the most loved, the most important, person in the world; and it had been long apparent to her friends at the clinic that the child believed herself unloved and unwanted by this mother.

What, then, was Nora's position—in a home where she was actually not wanted by one parent and believed herself

unwanted by the other; where she was watched with suspicion, constantly reminded of her misdeeds, and made to feel that the worst was expected of her; where her small brother was approved and preferred and compared with her to her disadvantage; where she was held apart from other children, made to feel that she was not fit to associate with them? Under such conditions she had never been given a fair chance; the question was, would her mother give her that chance now? If this could not be, then indeed it would be better to place her for adoption.

The interview was a long one. At its close Mrs. Nelson agreed to give Nora a two weeks' trial under conditions which had not only been thoroughly talked over between her and Miss Archer, but had been set down on paper by the supervisor so that the mother might have them to refer to. First of all, she was to show Nora by active demonstration of her affection that she did love her. Then she was to make it clear to the child that she trusted her—was to unlock the bureau drawers and the ice-box, was to impress upon Nora that she would no longer be suspected or treated like a thief. This once done, not another word was to be said regarding the stealing which was now assumed to be past and over. A regular allowance was to be given both to Nora and to her brother, and each was to be free to spend it as choice might dictate. And last, Nora was no longer to be kept from playing with the neighbors' children or going to the playground.

When all this had been agreed to, Miss Archer sought out Nora, who was disconsolately swinging her feet in the waiting room. Brought where her mother was, the child was mute, tearful, somehow more like a repressed, unhappy adult than a child. "Nora," said the supervisor, "You are probably thinking that your mother doesn't care for you, but you are

wrong. She is so upset by what you've done just because she cares so much for you, more than she does for any other little girl. She wants you to know that she loves you, and trusts you; from now on there will be no locks against you, and we believe you will show yourself just as trustworthy as any other member of the family. And you are going to have an allowance, so that you can learn to spend your money like a grown person."

On this note the interview ended, with the understanding that Mrs. Nelson was to report how things went under the new plan.

That very evening the mother gave a party for Nora and presented each of the children with ten cents, the first weekly allowance. Nora, shortly afterwards, took five cents that didn't belong to her. Mrs. Nelson refrained from making a scene, merely told the child quietly that she must give up half of her allowance. Next day the same thing happened again, and was met in the same fashion, Mrs. Nelson exercising great self-control.

Then something else happened—something which at the time seemed to the troubled mother the last straw, but which turned out quite otherwise. From the church school Nora was attending came a request that the child be removed and sent either to an institution or to public school. Nora, it appeared, was "deep, deceitful, and scheming"; she had a "peculiar personality"; the head of the school could get no response at all from her, she remained silent when questioned. Recently Nora had taken a fountain pen; she was told she would be given just five minutes to produce the pen, and produced it. This event had apparently precipitated the request for her removal.

Mrs. Nelson when she reported this development was again on the verge of despair; but she was persuaded to

persist in her present plan of handling Nora, while the clinic arranged for the child's transfer to public school.

From the beginning, Nora's new school adjustment was a happy one. There was a visiting teacher who took the child under her wing and introduced her to the principal as "my new little girl"—a form of words which particularly pleased Nora and made her feel at home. No one but the visiting teacher was told of the child's misdeeds. Her new teacher showed affection for her, her work was good, and because of her excellence in music she became quite a pet of the special teacher's. Except that she talked too much in class there were no complaints of her. The remaining months of the school year passed without striking incident, and Nora, to her great pride and satisfaction, was promoted to the upper fourth grade.

Meanwhile things at home had been going better, too; yet there had been tests enough of Mrs. Nelson's new philosophy and method of handling her daughter to prove her thoroughly committed to it. Such a test occurred one afternoon when the mother returned after a day's absence to find Nora at a small shop around the corner, treating a crowd of children to candy. Misappropriation of funds seemed evident, for had not Mrs. Nelson that morning given Nora twenty-five cents to be spent on lunch for herself and her brother? As it turned out, the small boy had received a ten-cent luncheon, while Nora had gone without and, adding her last allowance to the balance of fifteen cents, had indulged in a veritable orgy of treating. Her explanation, "When I give the children candy, they pay attention to me," showed what was clearly one of the child's main reasons for stealing—her desire to buy her way into the favor of other children. The fact that her reputation had been more or less damaged, that she had been much kept apart and made to feel herself

inferior, had undoubtedly intensified the drive for personal recognition and response which she, like every other young thing, felt.

Such drives to win esteem and love are of course among the commonest expressions of a lack of that security which has already been named as the first and most fundamental need of every child. This little girl, who had known three foster-mothers before she was three, and had then come into the hands of an own mother who was almost a stranger and a "father" who was altogether one; whose ignorance of the fact of her illegitimate birth had not protected her from the emotional storms of the mother to whom she represented the one hope of rehabilitation in the eyes of contemptuous kin; whose childish errors regarding property rights had been magnified into crimes which made her feel herself an outcast in her own home and among her fellows in school and neighborhood; what security had she ever known? During the first two years of clinic service—the surface of which has been hardly even skimmed in this narrative—there had been many indications of a profound unhappiness which underlay her superficial gaiety. Without in the least realizing her own motives, she was perhaps, by her stealing, seeking to win for herself not only recognition from her peers in the outside world but a more important place in the household than, since the coming of her brother, had been hers. Prominence, albeit a painful prominence, she surely did acquire through her misdeeds.

Be this as it may, it would appear that her mother's milder and more intelligent handling of the problem and greater show of affection, the possession by the child of a little money of her own, and the friendlier atmosphere in the new school, have combined to make Nora a happy enough girl so that she no longer feels driven to seek satisfaction in forbidden

ways. For more than a year now she has not been known to steal. She has been growing more and more useful at home, showing herself an especially reliable helper in time of sickness, and the appreciation expressed by her parents has been a great source of pride to her. Her skill on the piano has also brought her praise which added to her happiness. At a Sunday school Christmas party last year Nora was scheduled to accompany her brother who was to play the violin. Before the day of the performance Mrs. Nelson took her aside and suggested that she would need to be patient with Tom, as he was not so far advanced as she was. This recognition of her seniority and leadership clearly gave her much satisfaction, and when the occasion arrived she was "like a little mother" to the youngster. Some months after this event she admitted in so many words, to one of her friends at the clinic, that she had at one time felt herself unloved and unwanted, but had now quite got over this feeling.

In so brief a sketch as this anything approaching adequate discussion of a record covering four years of work is clearly impossible. Just what explains the mother's failure to persist in the new methods of handling Nora which had been repeatedly outlined to her during the first half of this period we do not know; nor yet what it was in the recorded interview with Miss Archer which gave her a new grip on the principles involved and on herself. Mrs. Nelson's own story, during this period, is here hardly touched upon, and for a variety of reasons, apart from the limitations of space, cannot be gone into more fully. Yet it should be stated that she has had her problems, not only as Nora's mother but as an individual, and that the personal help she received from the clinic psychiatrist did much to carry her through what were in many ways exceedingly difficult years.

What of Nora's future? As with all children, it is of course shrouded in uncertainty. The hazard that she will discover her illegitimacy is a serious one, as Mr. Nelson has not yet adopted her legally. To what extent this discovery would harm her it is impossible to guess; the special circumstances under which she made it would doubtless have much to do with the result. Her mother's problem may also become so intensified as to involve her anew. All we can be sure of is that the special difficulties which two years, or four years ago, threatened the child's peace, and happiness, and chance to grow up normally, have been cleared away, leaving her as free from handicapping troubles as most girls of her age.

Mrs. Nelson's efforts to force her daughter to redress the balance of her own life were only an exaggerated expression of a feeling common to many parents which has already been discussed: children are not to live their own lives, be good and successful for their own sakes; they must succeed so that their fathers and mothers may be compensated for failure or unhappiness or a sense of guilt, may be justified in their own eyes for a life otherwise unsatisfactory. Perhaps an occasional flicker of such a feeling comes to most parents, in moments of discouragement or as part of that longing for immortality in and through their children which appears to be all but universal. When it becomes habitual, fair play for the child, respect for his individuality, inevitably disappear, and a heavy burden is put upon him. That even so dull a mother as Nora's could come to realize this fact and change her ways may give hope to some of the rest of us.

“CONQUERED”

There are many fathers, mothers, teachers, and other grown-ups, on a high intellectual and moral plane and animated with the best intentions towards the children for whose care they are responsible, who in countless cases bring misery upon these without even being aware of the grave errors they are committing. Often enough, when it is manifest that the education is going awry, such persons, still with the best will in the world, reach out for other means which cannot fail to bring about even greater intellectual or moral aberration, emotional suffering, or additional injury.

OSKAR PFISTER,

Love in Children and Its Aberrations.

IT WAS his scout-master who conceived the notion that Bruce MacAllister might be helped by the child guidance clinic. For a year past Bruce had been a serious problem in home and school because of his lying and stealing.

This plan to have the boy studied was consented to reluctantly by Mr. MacAllister, who felt that he had “conquered” his son, had “straightened him around,” and feared that going to the clinic might give the boy the idea that his father was unable to manage him.

Ever since he was four years old Bruce had been addicted to the spinning of rather wild yarns. When about eight he appropriated a quarter belonging to his big brother and was severely punished. For several years following this episode, though his fabricating had continued, there had been no reason to suspect the boy of theft. Then, shortly after his twelfth birthday, his parents began to notice the disappearance of small sums of money from the home. After several months, during which about twelve dollars had disappeared, Bruce was caught redhanded.

About this same time there were other developments. Bruce was suspected on two or three occasions of taking money from club funds at school. He several times charged fruit and sweets at a nearby grocery to a neighbor, explaining plausibly that he was running errands for her. He left home early every morning during his Christmas holidays, telling his father that he had a job by which he was going to earn the price of his scout suit, and later accounted by a series of ingeniously varied tales for his failure to produce the necessary cash. His father, sympathizing with him in his disappointment, finally bought him a new suit; then chancing to meet the man for whom Bruce had said he was working, learned that the whole story was a fabrication. Later the boy did work for a time selling newspapers, but failed to turn in the money he received, so that his father had to make up the deficit.

These misdeeds, coming to light within a few months, had led to a series of severe punishments. Bruce had been whipped, had been made to apologize, had been threatened with reform school, then with reform school fare—bread and water. His father believed that these measures had been effective, as for three months past, in spite of frequent traps laid, in the shape of money left about the house, Bruce had not fallen.

From what could be learned during the period of study and treatment, Mr. MacAllister was not without justification in claiming that he had eradicated his son's tendencies to dishonesty. For several months preceding the boy's introduction at the clinic, and during the time he was known there, no suspicion of theft rested upon him. If, then, the clinic workers had held that only the most pressing problems of overt misconduct concerned them, Bruce would have interested them little. Since, instead, a child's misdeeds, past

or present, were significant to them chiefly as symptoms of some underlying difficulty, he interested them neither less nor more than if his had been a court case.

Bruce's parents were both of American birth and parentage. Mr. MacAllister was a college graduate and had taught for many years. Somewhat recently he had attempted to increase his income by going into the insurance business, but was still making only a bare living. This lack of success he accounted for, in talking with the clinic visitor, by reference to unfavorable economic conditions. He was proud of his record as instructor in a number of high schools and small colleges, and described himself as a leader in the communities where he had lived. He was a devout member of a strict sect and an ardent church worker, acting as Sunday school superintendent and instructor of a young men's Bible class. He had always, he said, been regular in his habits, had never used alcohol or tobacco. He spent most of his leisure time reading—was much interested in sociology, pedagogy, and phrenology. He had, he said, learned to control his temper, and administered punishment only after considerable thought. He had a strong, firm manner with children which he believed engendered admiration and respect. He declared that before a child could mend his ways he must be humbled and repentant. Mr. MacAllister's firm set mouth and strong chin, his erect carriage, serious expression, and penetrating, direct gaze, combined to strengthen the impression produced by his words.

To the observant visitor it was evident both that Mr. MacAllister was deeply interested in his son and desirous to do his best for him, and that the man was a profound egotist. He missed no opportunity to recount his own achievements, and his manner in doing so was decidedly bombastic. For

all his concern, he evidently quite failed to understand the boy's difficulties; as the visitor mildly put it, "His insight is very limited, and this handicap is increased by his lack of receptivity." The impression he conveyed was that of a closed mind.

Bruce's mother had been, her husband said, a sweet, gentle woman. She had sometimes had difficulty in managing the children, but had always backed him in his discipline. Like him, she had been a devoted church worker. She was "very wiry and gritty," never complained, even during her last illness. She had died of pneumonia when Bruce, her youngest child, was six years old.

The new wife whom Mr. MacAllister, after a year as a widower, had brought home, was more than twenty years his junior. His eldest child, Amy, ten years older than Bruce, had been so near her stepmother's age as to seem more like a sister than a daughter to her. According to Mrs. MacAllister they had been good friends. The girl had recently married and moved to another state. Her stepmother said she was sweet and attractive, with high ideals; she had never shown any interest in her younger brother. According to her father she was quiet, amiable, a thorough worker, but "lacked confidence." He had "conquered her will" at four years, and never afterwards had any trouble in disciplining her. Between these two statements he seemed to see no connection.

Both his daughter and his eldest son, two years younger, had, he said, urged him to marry, and both had liked their stepmother.

Luther, the elder son, now a young man of twenty-one, had left home at seventeen—not, his father hastened to explain, because of any difficulty, but for economic reasons. He had supported himself ever since, now had some kind of a

job with the electric light and power company which kept him out of town a great deal and paid him about thirty dollars a week. He had his mother's gentle, amiable disposition, had been a church member since his early teens, and was a boy of regular habits, his father said. He came home frequently for Sunday dinner. Mr. MacAllister added—as though to establish the truth of his statements: "Luther has often said he used to think I was severe with him, but now realizes I was justified in taking the firm stand I took. He doesn't chum with Bruce, says he doesn't understand what's got into the boy."

Apparently nobody did. Young Mrs. MacAllister seemed alert and intelligent, as well as pretty and attractive; but it was evident that she concerned herself little with Bruce, leaving the management of him entirely in his father's hands. She had two little daughters to absorb her time and attention—both healthy, normal children, so far as could be judged by appearances and by their mother's statements. She had also the house to care for—a rather shabby and commonplace house in a poor neighborhood, but fair-sized and furnished with fair comfort. She seemed to be a good housekeeper. A piano, with classical music which Mrs. MacAllister played, and a library of several hundred volumes, largely religious but including a number on philosophy, psychology, and sociology, gave evidence of the tastes and interests of the parents.

In addition to a rather full family history obtained from Mr. MacAllister (only the main points of which are covered in the foregoing pages), the clinic visitor had the opportunity to observe the various members of the family against their home background and in relation to one another.

She was impressed by the dominating influence of Mr. MacAllister and by the lax, inconsistent discipline and rather

emotional attitude displayed by Mrs. MacAllister in dealing with her own children. It was evident that there was a lack of harmony between the parents. Both, when seen alone, referred to this fact. Mrs. MacAllister was careful not to criticize her husband; she expressed admiration for what she regarded as his brilliant intellect, indicated that she bowed to his superior knowledge. He was stern and firm in handling the children, but not, she insisted, unduly harsh. She, however, acknowledged that frequent disagreements arose between them, though she did not specify the nature of these. The great disparity in age between the two was an unfortunate element in the situation.

Mr. MacAllister was more explicit. In emphasizing how his first wife had agreed with and cooperated with him he drew a contrast unfavorable to the second. Their disagreements, he said, had been more marked during the first year of their marriage than they now were; but Mrs. MacAllister's temper would be her ruination unless she learned to curb it. His own, as previously stated, he felt he had under perfect control; but he admitted that he criticized her for hers before the children.

Turning from the boy's background to the boy himself, we find that his birth and early development had been entirely normal, with no more than the average allotment of children's diseases and minor ills. His present habits were also, so far as could be judged from home reports, quite normal; he went to bed in good season, slept well without restlessness, walking, or talking, and had a good appetite. He had some of the annoying ways common to most boys of his age—took no interest in his appearance, didn't like to bathe, and was as likely as not to leave a new suit in a mess on the floor. He had no nervous habits.

Whether or not the boy masturbated was another ques-

tion; his parents didn't know. From the school, however, came the report that one of his teachers had caught him practising this habit and had reported him to the principal, who had talked to him several times. As a result, he had stopped—in the schoolroom, at least. His father, suspecting that the boy's irritability during the preceding winter might be due to this habit, had talked to him severely: "I warned him that self-abuse would turn him into a half-wit like one of the boys in town, and he looked afraid." A friend of Mr. MacAllister's, an orthodox minister, had however been the boy's chief instructor in sex matters. Whether the teachings of principal and clergyman had been as ill-advised as the father's we do not know.

At the time when the clinic study was undertaken the schools were closed for the summer and no access to school records was possible. However, two seventh-grade teachers who had recently had Bruce in their classes were seen. According to them, his work in general had been only fair—he had failed of promotion in the lower seventh grade; but he wrote exceptionally well, and in any special project calling for imagination and originality was likely to excel. His manual training grades were consistently good. In general, he seemed to need some special incentive to bring out the best that was in him. He had just been promoted to the eighth grade.

Both teachers realized that there was a home problem. Bruce had often hung around the building at noon, during the period when his thefts were being discovered, saying that he would rather go without food than go home to lunch; sometimes he was fed at the school cafeteria. Both teachers felt that he would have done better work had it not been for the unhappy home situation. One remarked that there was "something pathetic about the boy," which had led her to

give him as much individual attention as possible, but that he hadn't responded much. He had stayed away from home one night to avoid punishment; told her he had sneaked back late and slept in his father's garage. He had been rather given to complaints of headaches and other ills which the school nurse believed to be groundless. When the nurse had called at his home to inquire about his diet Mrs. MacAllister had been quite haughty, stating that he had all the good food he needed.

Bruce's deportment in school had not been good, as he was inattentive and whispered a great deal; however, he had never been really difficult to manage—"he seemed afraid of authority and one word would settle him." This from one of his teachers, the other remarked that while he would improve for a while after being talked to, he was unstable and would soon slip back. She counted him as one of her failures: "I could never make him stop day-dreaming."

As to his play life and his relations with the other boys the two teachers differed somewhat. The one who had been in closest touch with playground matters said that Bruce associated with all classes of boys and entered into play freely and willingly. He was not a leader, but had been several times chosen captain of the baseball team. His scout-master agreed with the other teacher that the boy lacked enthusiasm for games, was rather half-hearted about them.

Bruce was given to telling tall tales about his family, apparently to enjoy the sensation he created. For example, he had asserted that his mother was a half-breed Indian. The teacher who repeated this yarn felt that the restraint and lack of understanding at home were responsible for the turn which the boy's very active imagination had been taking. He appeared, she said, to crave sympathy.

According to his parents, Bruce's main interest was in reading. He took books from the library, mostly boys' books of adventure, went through them in a few days and returned them. When questioned he seemed always to have absorbed the content of what he had read. He was also interested in mechanical things and showed skill with his hands. He made many little carts out of boxes and spools for his small sisters; a magazine stand which he had made for his stepmother seemed a good, substantial piece of work. He took care of the family's chickens and rabbits, but was not especially interested in them, so his father said. In the home he was not a reliable worker, had to be continually followed up.

Except for the brief period of paper selling which had ended so disastrously, the boy's only experience as a paid worker was in a variety of outdoor chores done recently for Mr. Morrison, his scout-master, who had a farm on the outskirts of the town. Here again Bruce was said to be rather lazy and inefficient; he didn't seem to like or be interested in the work. Mr. Morrison, who was enthusiastic over his scout work and anxious to help any of the boys who needed help, had taken this way of assisting Bruce to earn the money for dues, equipment, and outings. He paid the boy a dollar and a half a day. Mr. MacAllister was glad to have his son occupied, but thought he was being overpaid, was sure he could not be worth half of what he was allowed; of course Mr. Morrison was a rich man, money meant nothing to him.

In this connection it is important to note that Bruce received no allowance or spending money from home.

His scout-master was important in Bruce's life not merely as his leader and sole source of income for personal uses; according to Mr. MacAllister, he had come to represent

the boy's ideal: "Bruce looks on Mr. Morrison as a hero." He was a fine appearing young man, direct and candid in manner, who spoke deliberately, weighing his statements carefully. To the clinic worker it seemed that he had not only a keen interest in Bruce but considerable understanding of him. It was easy to see how the boy's father might have come to feel a certain antagonism based on jealousy for one so favored first by fortune and now by his son's regard.

With the worker's impressions of the two men in mind it is interesting to note their opinions of one another. Mr. MacAllister, as we have seen, felt that Mr. Morrison was over-liberal; moreover, he did not believe the scout-master had helped Bruce overcome his difficulties, felt he was too lenient. "He should have expelled Bruce from the Scouts when he violated his oath by lying and stealing. When I talked with him about it he wanted to give the boy another chance, which he didn't deserve."

Mr. Morrison, on the other hand, felt that Mr. MacAllister was a narrow-minded, bigoted man, set in his ways and not amenable to suggestion. He understood from Bruce, and from general hearsay, that the father used severe forms of punishment, and believed he "would be very exacting and determined to conquer." The father's attitude in their talks had been harsh and he seemed to lack understanding of boys and their problems. Mr. Morrison believed that the home situation was largely responsible for Bruce's misbehavior.

While giving due weight to this interpretation, which appears amply justified by the facts, it is only fair to note that Mr. MacAllister, feeling that he had now conquered his son, was doing his best to make the boy feel he could count on him so long as he went straight. Recently Bruce had been accused by a neighbor's boy of having stolen his bicycle. Mr. MacAllister had gone into the matter carefully,

proving Bruce's innocence, and the wheel had been recovered from another boy. Bruce was much depressed by this episode, saying, "There's no use my trying to be good here because people will always suspect me." His father assured him he would stand by him as long as he continued to do right.

Full credit should be given the man for thus exonerating and sustaining his son; yet it must still be obvious how much his long-continued severity and expressed lack of faith in the boy had contributed to Bruce's depression, to his feeling that he was marked for life. Such a state of mind in a child hardly aids in the development of a wholesome mental life.

One interesting point about Bruce which seems highly significant is his alleged long-cherished ambition to become a missionary. According to Mr. MacAllister the painful experiences of the past year had not led to any change of plan on the boy's part. His father had promised him his library if he realized this ambition, and Bruce had recently referred to the books as his.

A talk with Luther MacAllister shed fresh light upon his young brother's choice of a vocation, as well as upon other features of the family situation. The interview took place one evening in the attractive suburban home where the young man roomed, and where, he said appreciatively, he was treated like one of the family.

Luther was a tall, quiet chap with candid gray eyes. He spoke with deliberation and evident sincerity.

He said that he had begun to work as a small boy; this was his only means of obtaining spending money. He left home at sixteen, not for economic reasons but because he could never get along with his father who was very stern and severe. He was made to go to church and Sunday school,

was forced to say grace at table, was not allowed to be out later than nine o'clock. Other boys of his age were not so tied down; he had no latitude, no chance to express himself. Finally, one day he refused to say grace and his father informed him that he would have to leave his roof if he proposed not to obey him. Luther left.

He was glad to get away from home, also, because he felt his stepmother was so utterly inadequate to her task. He had been devoted to his own mother—she had understood him and talked his difficulties over with him; she was even-tempered, amiable, affectionate, made the home harmonious; she was "the best woman that ever lived." Her death made a profound impression both on him and on Bruce. The young girl who succeeded her was incapable of filling her place. Then, too, when his friends saw him on the street with her and asked questions he found it exceedingly embarrassing to have to explain their relationship.

Luther said he now went home once or twice a month from a sense of duty. His father was, he thought, incapable of understanding a boy's problems; he had always been a dictator, never a confidant or chum; he was narrow-minded and stubborn, set upon making his family follow out his ideas. For example, he had been determined that Luther should become a minister and had persistently refused to listen to the boy's own wishes in the matter. Failing of this ambition he had declared that he would make Bruce a minister or a missionary.

During the five years since he left home Luther had seen little of his younger brother. This apparent lack of interest seemed to be due in part to a conscious desire to avoid thinking of his own unhappy youth, in part to a feeling of hopelessness regarding the home situation. His father had told him of the boy's misdeeds, but he had made no effort to dis-

cuss them knowing that his criticisms and suggestions would not be welcome. He had never talked to Bruce about his conduct or attempted to get his point of view. He assumed that the youngster's position was similar to his own at the same age, and that he could scarcely be helped so long as he remained at home where the father's moralizing and severe punishments discouraged and repressed him. What he needed was the understanding and affection of a true mother to offset the father's tendencies.

Despite this discouraging view of the situation, Luther expressed himself as ready to do what he could for Bruce. He would show more interest in the boy, pal with him, take him out for pleasure trips, encourage him to participate in sports. While he could not undertake to offer any suggestions, since his father had explicitly told him not to interfere, he would try to exert an influence indirectly by letting his father know that the discipline to which he himself had been subjected had not been so effective as Mr. MacAllister imagined; that the over-strict home training had in fact turned him against religion.

With so much known of Bruce's background and early history, study of the boy himself was undertaken. Physically, he was small in stature and ill-nourished, weighing fourteen pounds less than he should and showing a related postural defect. He suffered from a chronic pharyngitis and his teeth were in bad condition. Evidently he was in need of medical and dental treatment, dietary instruction, and a regimen of rest and outdoor exercise under competent direction. These needs were made plain to the family by the physician, who at the same time attempted to get the child's cooperation.

Mentally, on the other hand, Bruce proved himself a boy

of decidedly superior intelligence and superior general ability, without discoverable weakness. His educational achievement was even more in advance of his age than his general intelligence, and his performance in the visual-motor and mechanical fields was high. Comprehension, rote memory, and reasoning ability were all superior. He gave evidence of initiative, originality, and persistence, needed no urging or encouragement. He was unusually quiet and composed during the testing, and seemed to be exercising a degree of self-restraint. He attacked the problems in a thoughtful, business-like way, showing planfulness, definiteness of purpose, and good ability to profit by experience. He was quick to see the point and showed ability to think through a subject independently.

In the first long talk at the clinic in which an effort was made to understand the boy as a whole and to gain his confidence, Bruce appeared quiet and unassuming, a rather shy and sensitive youngster. He seemed fatigued; he was, however, frank and cooperative, assumed full responsibility for his behavior, and didn't blame anybody. It was evident that he had a strong sense of family loyalty.

After the reasons for the clinic study had been carefully explained to him, the boy was asked about his home situation. He began to cry, and for some time was speechless. Finally he brought out, "It's all over now." He then went on to explain that his dad used to whip him nearly every day because he took things and lied about it. These beatings were so severe that they left marks, but he deserved them, he said. He didn't steal or get whipped any more.

He was asked what had led him into the stealing. His answer was clear-cut. The boys he wanted to chum with had spending money, he had none. He wanted to be able to treat them, to do his share. Some of these boys, indeed,

put it up to him that he should buy things; also, some of them stole. He began by taking money at home, then took some at school, and charged things at the store. He got so he was always thinking about stealing and spending money, and these thoughts interfered with his work at school so he got left back a term. Except for this he had got along well in school—had skipped the first two grades. But this last winter he was afraid all the time he'd get caught. After he did get caught, he stopped. This was about the time he joined the Scouts, six months ago. "The scout-master helped me by talking it over with me, and then he asked father to give me a chance and I made good."

About his lying: he had lied in self-defense, after stealing, and then, he liked to try to make the fellows think he had something better than they had, when he really hadn't; what he lied about was mostly things to play with and spending money. Most all the other fellows had a little change in their pockets. "If I had it I'd spend part of it on clothes and candy and put the rest in the bank. Father gives me ten cents once a month for the show."

The shows he liked best were the educational ones; he didn't like the movies with too much shooting—they made him have nightmares; and then, "father don't like me to go." He was pitcher on the school baseball team and last year took part in track athletics, winning second or third place in several running and jumping contests. He liked to fish and hike and hunt—"not good things, but foxes and weasels." He also went swimming and could dive, but didn't like it so very well—was afraid of the water. Didn't know anything else he was afraid of—wasn't afraid any more that he'd steal, though it was hard to keep from lying.

He was in the eighth grade and got along fairly well. Arithmetic was easiest for him, and English hardest. He

liked the school and the teachers. He got on all right with the boys and girls; didn't go any more with the boys who stole. One of these boys had something to do with several girls and tried to get him to do the same thing. As to masturbation, years ago a preacher told him not to do this, it was "not good for you and made you weak"; so he had never done it.

His days for a month past had been spent in working for Mr. Morrison—weeding and things like that. After four he played until supper time: "I get 'nough play." After supper he took care of the rabbits. He slept well and ate lots; no more nightmares, didn't dream, wasn't fussy about his food. He went to bed at eight, got up at six, felt rested in the morning.

About his family? He liked his stepmother "pretty well", she scolded him a lot. She was fondest of her baby daughter; he liked his own brother and sister better than his half-sisters, they were so little; liked his big brother Luther best—but liked his father best of all, because—here he began again to cry. Urged to continue, he finally brought out, "Because since my mother died he is all the parent I've got." His own mother used to talk things over with him when he was bad; his stepmother scolded and beat him. No, his father hadn't any favorite among the children; but he didn't have time to help him out the way other boys' fathers did. Bruce thought of his mother most on Decoration Day, and when he saw her things at home; he hadn't dreamed of her now in two years. "Father tells me there is no use crying." He has no one to give his affection to now, his father is too busy all the time.

Bruce was asked suppose he could have three wishes, what would they be? He replied: first, to be happy; second, to have his mother back; third, to be a missionary.

Drawn out a bit as to the third of these wishes, he said his father wanted him to be either a preacher or a missionary, he didn't care which. Bruce had decided on the career of a missionary because he wanted to help the Africans and other people "to not do the things that he had done."

The impression which one gains from the recital of this boy is that, assuredly, he had been "saved from a life of crime" (so far as a child of his years could be "saved") before ever he came to the clinic. One would not for a moment minimize the importance of this accomplishment; yet at what cost had it been achieved! Temporary unhappiness is probably the inevitable accompaniment of wrongdoing discovered; a profound sense of guilt, which may color and warp the entire later life, is not inevitable, and no crime that a child can commit should be so handled by his elders as to leave him burdened with it.

The ways in which children react to harsh discipline are well illustrated by Luther and Bruce MacAllister. The older brother, driven to open rebellion, had cut the bonds that confined him and was endeavoring to make a life of his own; in the process, he had lost that religious heritage which his father had sought to impose upon him by force, yet apparently without losing, as so many under these circumstances do lose, the standards of right living with which it was associated. The younger, whether because of his youth and helplessness only, or because made of more malleable stuff, was weathering the storm by accommodating himself to the parental standards; after a revolt of a far more insidious and dangerous type than his brother's, he appears to have swung to the opposite extreme of complete compliance. To the father's mind, "before a child could mend his ways he must be humble and repentant"—and humble

and repentant Bruce was; a missionary or a preacher was the father's ideal for his son—and a missionary Bruce would be.

Not for a moment do we claim ability to read the boy's inmost thoughts; it may be that had he been reared in a foster home where religion was seldom mentioned he would yet have conceived the missionary ideal for himself. Yet as the outstanding facts come before us, what they suggest is an identification of himself with his parent in the effort, doubtless unconscious, to find protection and to recover the love he had lost and so greatly craved. What one fears for him—in addition to an unhappy childhood and youth—is a crushing out of individuality, a restriction of his natively excellent mental powers within limits too narrow to permit of their full development. Such fears may prove groundless—history shows that many eminent men have made their way up from beginnings as cramping. That experiences like Bruce's often leave marks which last a lifetime is undeniable; how serious these marks will prove no one is wise enough to predict.

Since it is with the parents, in most cases, that the power to fix the depth and indelibility of childish impressions mainly rests, it is with them that professional students of children's problems must largely deal if they are really to be of aid. The few contacts which are usually all that such professional workers can have with a particular child may meet his needs in a critical period; more often his greatest need is for the understanding and sympathetic guidance of the adults closest to him—an understanding and guidance that may constantly be relied upon for years to come.

Clearly, if young Bruce MacAllister was to be set free to develop happily and sanely there must be a change in attitude toward him on the part of his father and stepmother.

With both parents an effort was made to put over an appreciation of the good qualities and fine potentialities of Bruce—his unusual intelligence, his manly acknowledgment of wrong-doing and acceptance of its consequences, his love and loyalty toward those nearest him. With both, his physical deficiencies and needs were emphasized, and the constructive measures, such as improved diet, needed to build him up. An attempt was made to lead them, the father especially, to realize the boy's need of praise and encouragement, and the harmful effects which constant repressive discipline might have upon him. To Mrs. MacAllister his craving for affection,*his sensitiveness, his need of a woman's understanding and love, were dwelt upon, and the place in his life that there thus was for her—a place which his father could hardly fill.

The degree of success in bringing home this interpretation was markedly different with the two. Mr. MacAllister's egotism proved unassailable; as each topic was brought up he seized upon it and proceeded to expound his own ideas: Bruce was naturally small and wiry, rather than undernourished; "Spare the rod and spoil the child," and "The bent knee engenders respect for authority" were safe maxims in matters of discipline; all needed guidance in child training could, indeed, be obtained from the Scriptures; he had studied children in general, and Bruce in particular, so much that there was little anybody could teach him about them. The tactful handling he received carried the interview to an amicable conclusion, but it was only too evident that little or no impression had been made upon him.

Mrs. MacAllister, on the other hand, proved open-minded and ready to accept suggestions. She freely admitted that she had given her own children more love and consideration than she had Bruce; it had never occurred to her that this

fact might have some connection with the boy's stealing and his desire to remain away from home as much as possible. She recalled several instances that showed affection, or at least consideration, for her and for his little sisters on Bruce's part. It was evident that her interest in the boy's problem was stimulated, that the whole question of her relationship to him assumed new significance in her eyes.

From Luther MacAllister, too, a ready response was forthcoming. Not only did he provide some pleasures for Bruce, he undertook to give the boy a regular weekly allowance. He and his stepmother talked the situation over, and he later expressed the belief that she had accepted the suggestions offered by the clinic and would do her best to carry them out.

An apparently successful effort was also made to stimulate a favorable attitude toward Bruce in the new teacher whose room he presently entered; and through her it was arranged that he should receive a hot noon meal at school in exchange for some light duties in the lunch room.

Altogether, though the connection with Bruce and his family was maintained for only a few months, there was good evidence before the close of the period that conditions had improved for the boy. With two of the adults of his inner circle resolved to establish more close and friendly relations with him, his chances of happiness were clearly better. Our latest account of him comes from his scout-master six months after the last clinic contact with the family: Bruce, he said, had been in no fresh difficulties and had seemed much happier than formerly.

WHEN PARENTS DO THEIR PART

If you prayed for a fig and the Fates decreed you a thistle reflect upon the truth that a thistle full-grown and blossoming is a heartsome sight, but a thistle upon which a misguided soul has tried to graft a fig is a sorry, not to say a ridiculous sight.

I am not saying that one should not look for figs. By all means prefer them to thistles, but if you get thistles accept them in good faith and make the best of them.

ANGELO PATRI,

• *The Problems of Childhood.*

NO, Arnold was sure he couldn't remember any dreams. Unless—well, the other night he had dreamed something like this: "There was a race, and I won. The prize was candy and figs. They broke it up and gave it to all the rest, and I didn't get any. The others? Oh, Clay—the fellows call him 'sissy'—and his sister, and some other girls. Of course the prize wasn't real and I don't care if I didn't get any, but in the dream they all had some and I didn't."

Dreams sometimes take one at a single step into the heart of a child's difficulty. How far this was true in the present instance we shall see.

Dr. and Mrs. Arnold Wallace, both of them college-bred and scholarly, had been increasingly perplexed for some time by the attitude and behavior of their eldest son. They did not believe that Arnold Jr. was strikingly abnormal in any way, but they did feel that he presented problems that should be solved. Was there any way, they wondered, in which they might modify their attitude toward the boy with

good effect? They had finally asked the child guidance clinic to study him and advise them.

In thus seeking professional aid, the Wallaces, in their day and city, were doing nothing exceptional: a large proportion of the clinic's young patients were brought in by their own parents, many of whom were people of intelligence and refinement. What was unusual was the apparent readiness of this couple to believe that the key to their son's problem might be found in their own mistaken methods of handling him.

At school Arnold, now eleven and a half, was not a serious behavior problem. He had attended regularly since he started kindergarten at five, except for one term when he was out with whooping cough for a long time; and his only repetition of a grade had followed this extended absence. He was however a trying pupil, for he was indifferent, listless, and dreamy, and his attention was difficult to hold. He was irresponsible; for example, when made captain of the boys' line he ran on ahead instead of waiting to see that the line was straight. He frequently came late; indeed, so persistent had his tardiness become that his sister Anne—two years younger but only half a grade behind, and in the same room—had been instructed by the teacher to lead him to school by the hand in order to get him there on time. Whether this was a deliberate attempt to humiliate the boy, to further emphasize for him his inferiority to this evidently brighter little sister—of which he must already have been acutely aware—or whether the teacher thought only of the immediate practical issue of insuring his physical presence at the opening hour, we do not know. That both ends were served one can hardly doubt.

On the academic side Arnold's performance was highly irregular. Miss Niles, the teacher, said he was failing in

arithmetic because he didn't like it and worked carelessly. But he was a great reader—in fact, a bookworm—and possessed a large fund of information about geography and history. In these subjects he received “B” and would have been marked “A,” his teacher said, had it not been for his extremely poor effort. Miss Niles expressed the opinion that he would be a “regular wizard” some day because of his ability along such lines were it not for his carelessness and lack of concentration. His mother had once told her that she and his father felt the boy was stupid. Miss Niles thought him far from that; in her opinion his fundamental trouble was laziness. She would probably have agreed with Mrs. Wallace in her comment to the clinic visitor that Arnold's love of reading was of a passive type; he absorbed facts, but did not try to think them over.

At home, irresponsibility and laziness also figured largely in the sum-total of Arnold's unsatisfactoriness; but the situation was somewhat more complicated.

The family background, as already implied, was physically and culturally far above the average. The Wallace household, consisting of parents, four children, and maid, occupied a large pleasant old house furnished with taste and comfort, in a good neighborhood. Dr. Wallace was a liberal clergyman, who combined the function of preacher with that of professor of sociology. He came of fine old New England stock, had worked his way through college and taken an advanced degree abroad. He gave the impression of being rather reserved and austere, had a slow, deliberate manner, was said to have unusual capacity for hard work and strict standards of accuracy and thoroughness. According to his wife he was of an even disposition, not easily irritated or ruffled; he never let his feelings overrule his judgment, and was unusually just. He found Arnold very trying because of

his carelessness, indifference, and slowness in reasoning things out; he was more fond of and more interested in Anne, who was more like him. There was little companionship between him and the children—he did not know how to get down to their level.

Mrs. Wallace was an attractive woman with a charmingly quiet, friendly manner. She had done some advanced work in science following her graduation from college, had discontinued her studies only when home cares became too pressing. Academic work had always been easy for her, but she did not believe she had any unusual ability or concentration. She thought, looking back on her girlhood, that she had been rather subject to quick changes of mood, but probably not more so than most adolescents; in her marriage she had acquired stability and poise. Her conversation showed an analytical turn of mind; her attitude was thoroughly cooperative.

Of the three children younger than Arnold, Anne, who has already been mentioned, seemed to be a remarkable little person, unusually mature for her nine years. At school she was considered almost a model child, was characterized as "a regular shark" and "a perfect jewel." She was thorough and quick, and never wasted time in day-dreaming; that she did not show any marked ingenuity or originality and had "practically no imagination" did not seem to count against her. She was business-like and competent, cheerful and vivacious. She frequently tried to correct Arnold's shortcomings, but was not, the mother said, a nagger.

Next, again after an interval of two years, came Fanny. Her parents considered her "normal"; in temperament she was more like Arnold than like Anne. She disliked certain foods and would vomit after eating them, but this didn't worry her mother as there were plenty of healthful foods she

did like. She was disposed to gloat over Arnold when he was deprived of any of the good things of life in punishment for minor faults, and in general made herself rather annoying to him.

Nathaniel, the baby, was a healthy youngster of three who apparently presented no problems.

Coming now to Arnold's earlier history: he had made a normal start in life, and to judge from the full and careful account of his development given by his mother, had suffered from no serious diseases or other set backs, though she believed he had been slightly anemic. He had been somewhat slow about walking and talking, and following his weaning at eight months had not gained as he should—probably because of an error in diet at that time. There were no striking items to record.

According to Mrs. Wallace's report, the boy was now in good health, but not active or energetic. He had no habits such as nail-biting or thumb-sucking, no fears or terrors; he went to bed at half-past eight, but did not go to sleep readily, though he slept well once he was off. His speech was slightly indistinct, with a babyish tendency to confuse certain consonants, as n and m. He would like to be capricious about his eating, but usually ate what was served because he knew that if he didn't he would get no dessert. He did not form desirable habits readily—for example, after years of training, he still had to be watched like a small child or he wouldn't brush his teeth; and he seemed utterly indifferent to the reasons for such habits. Withal, he was a sensitive youngster, to whose eyes the tears came rather readily when he was confronted with an unpleasant situation. His mother wondered if perhaps, because of this tendency, he had not exposed himself to being bullied and called "sissy" by the other boys. He had never told her of any such experience, but

she knew how such infantile traits as these were likely to be regarded by the bolder spirits of his own world.

Of conduct suggestive of delinquency there had been little in Arnold's life. At ten he had taken some change from his mother's purse, and to account for his ill-gotten gains had told a tale about cutting the lawn for a neighbor—a tale readily proved false. He formerly often lied to get himself out of a tight place, but had improved until his mother felt he was now trustworthy.

The parents' management of their children appeared to be more consistent and reasonable than that prevailing in most of the families who find their way to child guidance clinics. There was no threatening or bribing, no failure to live up to conditions laid down; if a child was told he would be punished for doing a certain thing the punishment followed inevitably. Arnold had occasionally been spanked, but was more commonly deprived of pleasures or privileges.

What discouraged his father most about Arnold was the boy's apparent inability to grasp cause and effect relationships: each time he did a thing which he should well know was contrary to the family code he would express surprise that he was to be punished. Discipline for an offense thus seemed to have no power to keep him from repeating it. He was irritable and showed some resentment when punished, but soon recovered from it. On the whole he appeared indifferent to discipline or authority.

It was a cardinal principle in the Wallace family that the children should receive spending money only in payment for service rendered. Arnold didn't like to help around the house and would do so only when he was in urgent need of money for some special purpose. He never saved money, and when for a little while he had a paper route he lost part of what he collected and behaved in an unbusinesslike

manner generally. He never seemed to see ahead. All this was in marked contrast to the behavior of Anne, who was alert for every opportunity to earn. She planned ahead, and usually had three or four dollars in hand.

Arnold's slow and reluctant response to requests and commands, his carelessness and slackness in the performance of home duties, had led to many comparisons between him and this ever-ready younger sister, who never had to be asked twice to do anything. If he noticed or resented these comparisons his mother had not observed the fact. The two children seemed, indeed, to get on very well together.

Asked in regard to outstanding attachments between members of the family, Mrs. Wallace thought there were none. To be sure, Dr. Wallace took more satisfaction in Anne than in Arnold—there seemed, indeed, to be a slight antagonism between him and the boy. More comradeship in their relationship would be desirable, but reserves between fathers and sons were, the mother felt, rather customary; children were more apt, she believed, to confide in those of their own generation than in parents or other adults. She herself probably had more of Arnold's confidence than any one else in the family.

Arnold's lack of planfulness in practical matters was particularly noticeable—and exasperating—because of his conspicuous tendency to plan in matters far from practical. He had an exceedingly active imagination, and was always scheming to organize some new club or engage his companions in some adventurous undertaking; projects which never developed beyond this initial stage. He did, however, play well with other children, and while not a leader in physical activities he supplied many ideas for games. He appeared to be lacking in energy and was rather slow in his movements; he did not like to fight. He had a number of friends of about

his age, boys from families of much the same standing in the community as his own, with whom he played on equal terms.

In athletics Arnold was said to be interested, but in general made rather a poor showing. He was really proficient in swimming—could do a variety of stunts in the water—but became fatigued easily. Here again he was at a disadvantage in comparison with Anne, who though unable to rival him as a performer of feats could outdistance him in tests of endurance.

Arnold was eager to join the Boy Scouts as soon as he should be twelve years old. Looking farther ahead, he had declared he would like to be a chemist. Just what had led to the development of this particular ambition does not appear.

Physically, Arnold was found to be a rather small, slight boy for his age, two inches below average height and some ten pounds under weight. His blood pressure was a bit low. His sex organs were diminutive and incompletely developed. A slight awkwardness resulted from the fact that he toed in and was just a trifle bowlegged. Otherwise his condition appeared to be good—heart and lungs sound, nose and throat normal, teeth excellent. He had good features, but his color was not entirely satisfactory. He appeared somewhat undernourished, and showed much fatigue, growing faint at one point in the examination but quickly recovering when his head was lowered. He clearly did not enjoy stripping, and several times before the examination was over started to slip on his shirt.

This sensitiveness, taken with the boy's actual physical inferiorities, are worth noting in connection with his infantile characteristics already commented upon. Altogether the

picture was suggestive of an imbalance of the endocrine glandular system; and might also be closely related to that general, though vague and elusive, sense of inferiority which was to emerge as a prime difficulty in Arnold's case. There are few things boys of any age feel more keenly than any marked anomaly in the development of their sex organs as compared with those of their fellows.

In the psychological examination the boy was pleasant and cooperative. He enjoyed the tests, and though evidently fatigued kept at work, showing much persistence. On the Stanford-Binet he proved himself of definitely superior intelligence, with a mental age more than two years above his life age; other tests confirmed this rating. He read remarkably well, and had a superior vocabulary. Even in arithmetic, his weakest subject, he was well up to the work of his present grade in school, and in all other educational tests he ranked above it. He showed good though not remarkable aptitude for mechanics.

Despite this generally excellent record, Arnold's performance was a decidedly irregular one. He failed in tests for rote memory at ten and even at seven years, while he passed the fourteen-year tests for vocabulary and comprehension. In several tests his failure was apparently due to a peculiar blocking; thus, although he had so many words at his command he succeeded in producing only fifty in three minutes, instead of the sixty required for a pass in the ten-year word-association test. This blocking was accompanied by a tendency to stutter.

When a discussion of his problems was led up to, Arnold proved quite willing to talk over his various activities and interests and showed no tendency to evade issues. He was quiet, serious, well-mannered; he said he was happy, that he was not especially worried over anything. The conversa-

tion covered his school and play, his family and friends, his aims and ambitions, his worries, his dreams.

Toward school he displayed a normal degree of interest. He liked all his teachers but one—she was cross. He realized that he didn't do well in spelling and arithmetic, and was inclined to explain his difficulties with the latter subject defensively, saying that the teacher mixed up the problems, didn't make them clear; also—though his eyesight was good—he said he had difficulty in distinguishing the "times" symbol from the "plus" symbol. On the other hand, he announced with a quiet smile of satisfaction: "The other boys are boasting now of me because I am the best in geography." He particularly disliked current topics, which came the first thing in the morning; he didn't like getting up before the others and discussing a topic, and thought that because he sat in a front seat he was called on more often than was fair.

Was the boy's distaste for this morning exercise in any way responsible for his tardiness, the psychiatrist wondered? Arnold himself asserted that his father's watch was frequently ten or fifteen minutes late—but also admitted that perhaps he didn't get up early enough.

On the subject of his play life Arnold frankly said that he didn't have much to do with most of the children at school or in his neighborhood; they were too rough. He would like to play ball with the crowd, but they wouldn't have him as he didn't run the bases well. His chief companions were Clay Barton and Willis Kuntz and Harry Hayes; Clay was a cripple, Harry was very fat and couldn't run well. They played tag, and catch. The crowd used to call him and Clay "sissy"; they still called Clay this, and Arnold now wondered whether perhaps his association with Clay had led to his being so labeled. Arnold had recently refused to wear

a polka dotted waist for fear the boys would call him sissy. He didn't as a rule retaliate when called names, just felt bad; once though he had hit back by calling a boy named Mather "mother's boy." He wasn't much of a fighter, but twice had fought in defense of his belongings. Usually he just showed he was angry when anyone tried to interfere with his things, and the fellows ran away.

None of his companions swore or used obscene words. He appeared to have no knowledge of masturbation. His mother had instructed him in the physiology of childbirth.

Arnold displayed "a normal, boyish interest" in church and Sunday school. They had parties for boys and girls at the church. These were evidently the chief social events of his life.

When his father's name was introduced, Arnold reacted by remarking that he wished his father would keep his word; he had promised him a typewriter and some paper clips. Regarding his mother the one point he dwelt upon was his worry about her when she was out. All evening he would keep thinking, "Maybe something has happened to her." This was one of the chief things that kept him from going to sleep. He worried too over his father, if he happened to be out of the city, and over school, especially topics, and the fear that he'd forget to take his home work and all his things in the morning. His inability to pronounce words correctly, a loan of fifteen cents to a boy who hadn't repaid him, the fact that some stamps he'd sent money for hadn't come—such matters too worried him, and contributed to his wakefulness.

As to the other children in the family: Anne teased him and annoyed him in various ways, and Fanny bothered him a lot. He had been dreadfully worried at the time of her birth because his mother went away to the hospital without

telling him where she was going; perhaps this acute anxiety accounted for the many lesser ones that still haunted him when his mother was away. Fanny was very helpless and had to have things done for her; she tried to boss him; she and her friends piled on him so that when he saw her coming with them he would go to his room to escape—it being the only spot where they couldn't get at him. When the mother was away at meal time Anne would take her place and Fanny would cry. When their father was away, Arnold would take *his* place and then Nat would come round and hit him. He liked Nat though—Nat was all right. He thought his father liked Nat better than himself; he brought home more things for Nat, and would take him up on his shoulders and carry him about.

It was at this point that Arnold was asked about his dreams. He was positive he couldn't remember any, but eventually recalled no less than five. Of these the one which appeared most significant has already been given at the beginning of this narrative.

This dream was one of many indications of what, upon review of the situation, was felt to be the boy's main difficulty: Arnold was burdened by a sense of inferiority of which he himself was only partially aware. Among his fellows his small stature, awkwardness, and fatigability prevented him from competing successfully in sports and games—hence his four-cornered play with other physical inferiors; while his mild speech defect had led to his being a good deal teased. In the home his seniority among the children did not win him the position he felt his due—the prize he had won was being taken from him. He received little or no praise; Anne, two years younger, had almost caught up to him in school and was constantly compared with him to his disadvantage by his parents, Fanny had things very much

her own way; Nat was apparently preferred by their father. That Arnold was not fully conscious of the extent to which his parents were dissatisfied with him as a son is probable; that he sensed the incompatibility of the parental ideals for him with his own innate interests and emotional needs is practically certain. To what extent his distaste for school work, especially current topics, his tardiness, his lack of application, were related to the general discouragement resulting from these accumulating items and from the boy's actual physical inferiority is hard to say; but a child's attitudes in home, school, and community seldom maintain themselves in complete isolation.

In an interview which was presently arranged with Arnold's parents, the director of the clinic endeavored to put over an understanding of the boy's problem as it appeared to the professional workers of his group. Arnold was, he explained, an intelligent boy, though his mind was of a different type from those of the other members of the family. Especially sharp was the contrast in mental make-up between father and son: Mr. Wallace was quick in all his thought processes, very analytical, eminently practical; while Arnold was none of these things, but was more imaginative, more æsthetic, and to reach a given end went through essentially different mental processes from his father's. He was also a somewhat nervous and undernourished child, who needed to be built up by special diet and a careful regimen of exercise and rest. It was suggested that his parents give him more responsibility and let him carry it without any checking up from them. His father especially was urged to take more interest in the boy, to be more companionable with him, to pay less attention to his faults and more to points that could be praised. He should remember that his son had some high-grade stuff in him that was bound to come out if given the

chance, but that he might be overwhelmed by the contrast with his more energetic sisters and brother, especially if he continued to feel that the paternal interest was centered in these other children rather than in himself.

Throughout the interview Mrs. Wallace's attitude was most open and receptive, but her husband's seemed quite the opposite. He appeared to be a stern man, rigid in his views, with uncompromising standards and little in the way of artistic interests or tastes: in short, a thoroughly practical, unimaginative type. The psychiatrist received an impression of strong resistance on Dr. Wallace's part to the interpretation he himself was setting forth, and carried away the depressing feeling that he had failed to get anything at all across to the man.

That this was an unduly pessimistic view of the situation seems apparent from a talk which one of the clinic workers had with Mrs. Wallace a week later. Both she and her husband, the mother stated, had been much pleased with and interested in the interpretation which had been given them. Especially were they relieved to learn that Arnold was not defective and that he had decided abilities. She felt that the clinic contact had already helped them; as Mr. Wallace put it, the report had crystallized for them ideas which they had themselves begun to suspect might be the true ones.

Arnold, too, had seemed affected by his experiences at the clinic: he had been more communicative. For the first time he had talked to his mother about his difficulties in making social contacts. She felt that the atmosphere of the home had improved.

As a first step in changing their own attitudes, the parents had immediately stopped pointing out Anne as a model to Arnold and drawing comparisons between the two children. So marked had been the change that Anne, who had become

accustomed to her rôle, had been quite hurt and it had been necessary for her mother to take her aside and explain how they were trying to make Arnold feel better. Anne was sensible enough and honorable enough, Mrs. Wallace said, not to talk to her brother about this.

In this interview between worker and mother it was agreed that an attempt should be made to build up companionship between Arnold and his father, and that in general a policy of expressing more approval of the boy and more interest in his activities should be followed. The question of the children's diet was also gone into fully. It seemed on the whole a fairly well-balanced one. Arnold's allowance of milk had already been increased with the aim of building him up.

The treatment contacts thus begun early in February were continued until the family left town in June, Arnold coming to the clinic, while his mother was seen at home. Arnold's gain during this five months' period was noteworthy though not at all spectacular. Some improvement would doubtless have occurred in any case, since a more congenial school setting undoubtedly contributed to his adjustment, and his association with the Scouts, which began promptly on his twelfth birthday, in May, brought him much satisfaction. Other elements in the changing situation, directly traceable to the acceptance of suggestions by parents and boy, are worth recording.

In an early interview with the worker Mrs. Wallace mentioned what she felt had been the chief contribution of the clinic: its report had given her and her husband confidence in their son, had relieved the tension in the home atmosphere. Dr. Wallace had become more tolerant in his attitude toward the boy, and while no great degree of comradeship between the two seemed possible in view of the father's inability to step down from his adult level, things were certainly going

better. Arnold seemed to have more poise, was not so "nervous" and easily disturbed.

Arnold's own account of things furnished supporting evidence for his mother's statements. His face brightened as he told how he and his father had been building a gymnasium in the attic. They had horizontal ladders and several other pieces of equipment, and hoped to add rings, and a swing for the younger children. He appeared more animated, happier. The physician found evidence of better health in his increased color and more active interest in athletics and hiking, though he gained only moderately in weight.

One difficulty encountered during this period was in persuading the boy to rest as advised; but this was finally accomplished by the social worker, who went over with him the details of a training schedule, stressing the necessity for the rest periods if a strong body was to be built up which would be useful in later years. At her suggestion he joined a Y.M.C.A. gymnasium class which met twice a week, and kept a record of the extent to which he lived up to the schedule requirements; and while this diary never showed one hundred per cent adherence to the conditions laid down, it did show an increasing approximation to that standard. As his mother summarized his achievement along this line, in June, he had followed his schedule "surprisingly well." Some of the other boys in the neighborhood had recently been inclined to jeer at him for going to bed early, and had teased him to stay up. He had assumed in return quite a lofty and condescending tone: he wanted them to understand that he went to bed early because he wanted to; his manner implied that he pitied any boy who did not show enough good judgment to get sufficient sleep.

When last seen Arnold was looking well physically, showed a great deal more alertness and interest than at

first, and reported that things were going well with him. Most of his difficulties seemed to have quieted down; his school grades were all good or fair, and his marks in physical education had come up surprisingly, a fact which he attributed to his training at the Y. He also proudly related that on the Scout hikes he was proving himself a better walker than some of the fellows, though he couldn't run so well. He was receiving a regular allowance now, was saving to buy a bicycle, and his father had promised to match everything he saved so he would be able to get one reasonably soon. When asked "Is your father different toward you?" he replied, "Yes, he certainly is," and added, as tears came to his eyes, "He hugged me today."

It would be a pleasure to report that as a result of his improved physical condition and relief from emotional tension Arnold had acquired all the virtues that he lacked. Unfortunately, an obstinate fact stares us in the face, from the record of the last interview with his mother: the boy still performed home tasks—when he could not avoid them altogether—without interest, and in slovenly fashion; the ragged lawn was a mute witness against him. Like most youngsters of his age—and older—Arnold was still some distance from being a model boy.

The story of Arnold Wallace is probably the least striking of any offered in the present collection. The excellent home background and comparatively minor deviations from the average of the boy himself may raise a question as to why an account of him is included. The very fact that the problem presented is a relatively mild one may, however, mean that it is fairly common, and the case was in fact selected for presentation quite deliberately as a corrective to any possible tendency on the reader's part to conclude that only

tragically threatening situations are worth serious attention.

As an illustration of parental cooperation with the clinic Arnold's story is also of interest. Fathers and mothers on the cultural level of Dr. and Mrs. Wallace might be supposed (someone may suggest) to be capable of managing their own households without help. But men and women on that level have had, as a matter of fact, the best opportunity to learn both their own limitations and the contributions which workers with various types of specialized training may make to their thinking. They realize that no parent can achieve complete objectivity toward his own children, and that in puzzling situations it is wise to avail oneself of the best professional aid available. Where a child's happiness and success are in question the open-minded parent will hardly be kept from seeking such aid by a desire to prove his own self-sufficiency.

A "SISSY"

There are, then, two opposite ways in which a child may suffer a fixation at an immature stage in his emotional life. The first is by being denied an opportunity to live through an experience, at the time that such an experience is normally to be expected. The second, which is the exact opposite of this, is for him to overemphasize, or prolong, an emotional stage. This may occur by our devoting too much attention to it. . . . We are familiar with the "Mama's boy," the Fauntleroy type, who is so beautiful and attractive in a book, but so insufferable when met with in real life! In the last analysis, he is the product of a mother-love so selfish, so exclusive, that his affections have never been allowed to develop beyond the confines of her all-absorptive cravings.

FRANK HOWARD RICHARDSON, M.D.,
Parenthood and the Newer Psychology.

"**I** LOOK well, but I am really sick most of the time, doctor."

The big round glasses through which Maurice Whipple gazed at the clinic physician as he made this weighty observation seemed somehow to emphasize the girlish contours of his small face with its tiny retreating chin. Though well grown for his ten years, Maurice was in fact not a robust looking boy.

He was a friendly little chap, very ready to answer questions and even to give information spontaneously; his talk was rapid and excited, at times flighty, as he leapt from topic to topic. He was fond of both his parents, he said—they provided for all his wants and taught him right things. He was in his father's class at Sunday school, and attended church regularly. He liked every-day school, and his teachers there, too. No, he had no very intimate friends: many of

the children were rough and unrefined, they chased him and called him "sissy" and made fun of him generally. One boy who was bigger and stood up for him he was very fond of.

What was he interested in? Well, he liked to watch exciting things such as races, and competitive games, and aeroplanes. He was keen about outdoor sports—riding, camping, swimming, skating. "I'd like to have a bicycle, but if I ride too much I get tired and sweaty." He believed in Santa Claus—"Other boys say there's no Santa Claus, but I'll believe in him so long as he brings me stuff!" He'd like a brother or a sister for company—but then the trouble was he'd have to share his things.

What was he going to be when he grew up? Not a clerk—clerks didn't make enough. He'd like to be a doctor or a professional man of some sort who is refined and earns a good income.

As to sex, it was evident from the boy's responses to a few leading questions that his knowledge was nil. He declared however that he was "crazy about the girls" and "blue if they turned him down." "I had a very pretty girl once, but I gave her up because she was rough and unrefined. I've got a girl now, over in Lakehurst. The boys don't know about her so they can't tease me."

Many as were the evidences that this youngster was a butt of ridicule among his boy associates, it did not appear in this interview that he was much upset emotionally by the teasing to which he had been subjected. That he "enjoyed poor health" was however obvious: he dwelt at length upon a variety of minor ailments, and even, in speaking of his pet cat, talked of her indispositions.

Maurice had been referred to the child guidance clinic by a dispensary physician under whose care he had been for some two years past. The record of the boy's health during

these and several preceding years covered more than two closely typed pages, from which stood out such terms as "anemia," "rickets," "St. Vitus dance," "nervousness," "enlarged cervical glands," "sore throat and enlarged tonsils," "hyperopia," "amblyopia" (eye defects), "moist rales" in the chest, and "thickened pleura." Yet in the opinion of the referring physician, although the boy had definite physical handicaps, "the fundamental situation is the over-solicitude of the mother." An only child, Maurice was treated by her in many ways as an infant, although he appeared to be of more than average intelligence.

The conclusion reached by the school people who knew Maurice best was almost identical with that of the dispensary physician. The year before, when the boy entered the third grade, his mother had, in his presence, given the principal a detailed history of his illnesses, emphasizing his nervousness and asking that special consideration be paid him. Throughout the year she had frequently visited the class room, interfering in various ways, and it was noticeable that on these occasions Maurice displayed more of his restlessness and of the twitchings, jerkings, and grimaces that were the signs of the nervous condition referred to. He seemed to enjoy his mother's visits and to like to be the center of interest, and was inclined to talk of his difficulties. He was something of a whiner and a tattletale. When his teacher told him he need not be so nervous, that he should try to control himself instead of continually excusing himself on this ground, his mother was greatly incensed and accused her of trying to convert him to Christian Science.

Throughout that year Maurice had also been uniformly poor in scholarship, owing to inability to concentrate. Less active and aggressive than the other boys, he had generally been left out of their games; and he had developed numer-

ous petty, annoying tricks—hitting the other children's elbows when they were writing, breaking up their activities on the playground, and so forth. When he got into quarrels or was especially teased he would sometimes remain at home for several days, while his mother would either call or write a long note to the principal explaining how nervous, sensitive, and upset he was. In one of these notes she stated that Maurice in his prayers had mentioned his playmates, seeking forgiveness for them and asking to have them changed.

This year in the fourth grade, however, things had been going somewhat better. To be sure, Maurice still missed school from six to ten times a month, reappearing after these absences with excuses based upon illness. But he was paying attention, was *not so restless as formerly*, did not annoy the other children so much; and not once had his mother attempted to interfere with the school discipline. Recently she had even written a note thanking the teacher for efforts which she realized were largely responsible for the boy's improved standing.

While thus our hero's problem in one sphere had been mitigated if not entirely cleared up, visits to the home soon brought evidence that there were numerous phases of it still unsolved.

So far as could be learned, the child's prenatal and early postnatal development had been entirely normal, he showed "the sweetest temper" as a baby, and not until he was a year old did he have a serious illness. Although his weaning had been completed some months earlier, he at this time began to have difficulty in assimilating food, running a temperature day after day. No definite diagnosis was made, and he gradually improved; but that a real and serious nutritional difficulty was involved seems apparent from the evidences of anemia and rickets later found. As to whether

he had ever actually suffered from St. Vitus dance there seemed to be some doubt. Several times during later years a suspicion that he was tubercular had been entertained, but the studies made had brought no positive evidence of infection. On the whole, as already pointed out, the danger of his developing serious disease seemed to his medical advisers less pressing than the danger of his being smothered by maternal solicitude.

The signs of this over-solicitude were many. Until a few months before, when the dispensary physician put a stop to the practice, Maurice had been given a special dinner and put to bed at seven o'clock, before his father reached home. Yet he was said not to be fussy about his food, to "like things that were good for him." He slept in his parents' room—had always been a light sleeper, inclined to be restless and having difficulty in getting to sleep. He never wet the bed, but his mother attributed this good record to her own vigilance: she herself slept lightly, and upon the slightest sign of restlessness on the boy's part was accustomed to get him up and into the bathroom. In the morning she still helped him dress, fearing that he would be late to school.

Yet, despite this record of care obviously tending to keep the growing boy in a state of babyish dependence, Mrs. Whipple was sure she did not spoil him. Her husband did—that she was free to acknowledge! Once when she had spanked Maurice—lightly—for failing to obey her promptly, his father had entered a protest right before the child; he would never be disciplined if his father had his way!

The evidence as to spoiling was, however, overwhelmingly against the mother. That of physicians and teachers from their special points of vantage has already been referred to. A former neighbor related how Mrs. Whipple used to skip down the street with her son when he was seven or eight

years old, pick him up in her arms and cover him with kisses in full view of the entire neighborhood. And last, but by no means least convincing, came the father's testimony.

According to him, Mrs. Whipple was constantly talking to Maurice about his health, expressing her fears that he would not be warmly enough clad, would catch cold, and so on. She disciplined him most impulsively, becoming violently angry when she chanced to disapprove of anything he was doing and issuing threats which were rarely carried out. She was very much of a dictator in the home, there were clashes between husband and wife of which their son was frequently a witness. After these she would often appeal to the boy's sympathies, representing herself as ill used and so leading him to display a coolness toward his father. She raised objections when the two wanted to do things together in which she had no part—even such innocent things as attending prayer meeting or taking a walk. Mr. Whipple believed that this friction at home had much to do with the boy's lack of concentration on his studies; also he felt that the mother's efforts to force him in his school work had a bad effect. He felt that Maurice would develop more healthily if he could be placed for a few years in a totally different environment, but was unable to suggest how such a change could be managed, as the mother would never consent and there were neither relatives who could take him nor any surplus cash available to pay for board or schooling.

Mr. Whipple would have left home long ago had it not been for the boy, he said. He had never been very successful in business, but believed he might do better if relieved of his wife's nagging criticism. "You know when you are constantly told you are no good, you begin to act accordingly, even if you don't actually believe it." He was a hardware salesman—had once set up in business and failed, and was

now again clerking in a down-town department store. He appeared to be an easy-going, rather ineffectual individual. While his manner of discussing the family problem suggested a detached, objective attitude, some allowance for prejudice had of course to be made.

Mrs. Whipple, on the other hand, seemed a highly excitable woman. She had noticeably protruding eyes, to which the tears came readily as she discussed her son's difficulties and the financial situation of the family. Her husband, she said, had no bad habits and was extremely fond of Maurice; his only fault was that he was not a money maker. Recently there had been an hiatus between his jobs from the effects of which the family was still suffering.

The home was a rather unattractive four-room apartment in a dingy quarter. It was disorderly and not over-clean. Mrs. Whipple had, she said, been a bookkeeper before her marriage. In contrast with her home, she herself presented a very neat appearance.

Both parents were active members of the nearest Methodist church, and most of their social life and their son's centered there. Maurice was very devout and frequently offered prayer at the mid-week service. All the church people, especially the grandmothers, were fond of him. He was "just like a little deacon" his mother said; she hoped he was going to be a minister. He was of a cheerful disposition, affectionate and generous, but extremely sensitive and excitable. He loved to read—though he preferred to be read to—and when absorbed in this or any other occupation tended to disregard everything else.

His mother declared that he disliked being ill, discussing his ailments, and thinking about his health, and was reluctant to go to see the doctor. He was eager to participate

in the ordinary outdoor games of boys, but she discouraged him because he so readily became excited and fatigued.

Physical examination at the clinic brought to light no defect more serious than irregular, poorly aligned teeth in a small receding jaw, and defective eyesight corrected by glasses. Organically and nervously the boy was sound. He was slightly above the average height and weight for his age.

On the mental side tests indicated that Maurice was not only normal; he was intellectually somewhat superior, with an excellent memory for auditory material, a good vocabulary, good reasoning ability, and mechanical gifts considerably greater than those of the average boy of his years. Tests of school work, however, did not indicate any unusual educational accomplishment. His restlessness was noticeable, and he showed much fatigue.

It is evident enough that this "perfect little gentleman," this "carefully nurtured flower"—to quote the apt characterizations of one of the clinic staff—needed more than anything else to be helped to become a real boy. Intellectually his good native equipment, in the absence of any terrifically upsetting emotional disturbance, would probably carry him through; socially he badly needed to be freed from his habits of infantile dependence, to be helped to a better rapport with his fellows before the heightened sensitiveness of adolescence, with all the new stresses and strains of this period, should lift his problem, as yet relatively mild, into one of major importance. To attain this end he must himself ardently desire to do so, must be ready for the plunge into a more independent, manly mode of life; and his mother must be willing to free him for it.

The prognosis in Maurice's case was not regarded as good. His feelings of inferiority, based upon an exaggeration of

physical weaknesses, which served to excuse all deficiencies; his attachment to infantile ways, his habits of dependence upon his mother; her even more marked dependence upon him for emotional satisfactions not to be gained elsewhere, her general instability; the relegation of the father to a place of minor importance in the household where he could hardly serve as the masculine ideal every boy needs—these were all factors in the situation which experience in many another family had shown to be difficult to change. However, the problem was attacked in a frank talk at the clinic with Mr. and Mrs. Whipple in which the injustice that had been done the boy by shielding and coddling him was explained, and the course that should be followed to retrieve these errors mapped out.

The first few visits paid by the clinic worker to the Whipple home served to set in still stronger relief the bad health habits of Maurice and his mother: there was much talk of "upset stomachs," of the tonsillitis which "always follows," of the doses administered at such times. Yet to a quite surprising degree the mother proved open to suggestion. Her son's remark to the clinic physician about looking well but really being sickly was repeated to her, and she saw the funny as well as the tragic side of such an attitude on the part of a small boy. She admitted that she had been in the habit of talking before him of his ailments, and though she thought she was doing this less now, she agreed to eliminate such words as "nervous," "excited," and "sick" from her vocabulary when he was present. She would discontinue helping him dress, would call him a little earlier and leave him with full responsibility for getting ready, trusting to his dislike of being sent to the principal's office for tardiness to spur him on.

That these changes, especially those regarding references

to ill health, were not made all at once any one who has struggled to break habits of long standing will readily believe. Yet gradually a more healthful atmosphere did come to prevail in the home. To this end other changes in the daily routines of mother and son contributed.

One of these was apparently the result of an early suggestion to Mrs. Whipple that she seek employment outside the home. She had thought of this, she said—and in a surprisingly short time, she put her thought into action. The part-time work which she found in a neighboring store seemed to have an excellent effect both in easing her financial anxieties and in giving her interests which served to decentralize the attention which had been focussed too exclusively upon her son.

With the boy an even more absorbing new interest or group of interests was developed with equal speed and success. Never was there a more enthusiastic response to recreational opportunities. Introduced at a boys' club center, Maurice plunged immediately into activities occupying three afternoons a week—a cub scout group, a gymnasium class, a swimming class; and presently had persuaded the director, almost against that gentleman's judgment, to admit him to a fourth—a clay modelling class. He was awkward in games, had poor coordination and little muscular strength—for example, no matter how hard he tried he could not succeed in chinning the bar even once. The other boys tolerated him somewhat condescendingly, calling him "sissy" and "baby" when he fell noticeably short of their standard; but nothing daunted him—he was wholeheartedly interested, and struggled hard to keep up. In the clay modelling class he did really good work.

Of all these new interests Mrs. Whipple heartily approved. She wanted her son to become a "real boy," she declared.

Hardly more than two months had elapsed before she was proudly announcing that for three weeks she had not mentioned an ache or an ailment of his. She eagerly welcomed the visits of the social worker, and arranged for Maurice to visit the clinic at the appointed times.

In these clinic interviews Maurice poured forth a veritable flood of enthusiasm in regard to his new activities and his doings in school: everything was going splendidly with him, and already he saw himself succeeding in all sorts of undertakings which a few months before had been beyond his wildest dreams. In view of the known facts as to his actual progress, it seemed wise to attempt to bring the boy down a little nearer to the earth, to moderate his excessive expectations and lead him to see that years of sustained effort would be needed before he could acquire average ability in some lines upon which he was entering. It was suggested that he take things a little more quietly and try to live more in reality and not so much in dreams. He seemed to understand the point—though it cannot honestly be said that any great change in his rapid, flighty manner of talking or any marked reduction in his exaggerated estimates of future developments were noted during the months he was under observation.

An effort was also made to show the boy that he had been too concerned about his bodily health and thus had developed the habit of being sick. This point he apparently grasped.

During the months when Maurice was under observation his school work and his behavior at school continued to improve. Interviews with his teacher made it clear that her understanding and skillful handling of him were mainly responsible for this gain. In one of the clinic worker's early talks with Maurice, when he was ill at home, he had expressed his delight at having been made group captain over part of

his class. Upon his return to school this privilege was withdrawn for a time and given to a boy who attended more regularly. From this time on there was a striking improvement in Maurice's attendance record. What part in this gain was to be attributed to the direct influence of the clinic upon him and his mother, what part to his own drive to reattain the coveted eminence, we shall not attempt to say.

With both his teacher and his principal the question of possible promotion in view of the boy's superior intelligence was taken up, and after he had been coming regularly for some time special tests were given and he was advanced half a grade. Fortunately this promotion did not mean an immediate change of teacher.

Before the close of school plans for a month of camp life for Maurice had been laid. By this time the leader of his club had reported that he was adjusting to the group a great deal better than at first. From a preliminary three days' hike he returned "tired and dirty but happy." Though scandalized by the roughness of the trip, particularly by the fact that the boys had not once taken off their clothing during it, his mother realized that it had been a good thing for her son. However—"He wasn't a bit lonesome for us," she commented rather forlornly.

"Oh, we boys were just too busy to be homesick," declared Maurice. Then, gently and with a touch of solicitude, "You know, mother, you've got to get used to my being away."

It was not altogether easy for the boy, though—this transition to the rough-and-ready life. "I'm really sort of afraid to go to camp," he confessed. "They work you to death, and the boys call you sissy. All the same, I'm going if I have to sell my shoes to get there. And I'm going to be game and stick it out if they kill me."

The response to attempts at treatment by the clinic staff is often surprising. Parents who have appeared eager for help sometimes prove unable to accept it when proffered because the interpretation of familiar facts runs counter to deep-seated habits and prejudices of theirs, hurts their pride or threatens to cut them off from consolations to which they have been clinging. A surprise of just the opposite sort was furnished by Maurice Whipple and his mother. For all the babying to which he had been subjected, this youngster was evidently still a genuine boy in his tastes and ambitions; for all her exaggerated concern for his health, her apparent desire to keep him closely bound to her, Mrs. Whipple was evidently still capable of appreciating what was best for her son and seeking it for him. This was the more remarkable since, despite the reserve she maintained regarding her relations with Mr. Whipple, it was evident enough that she found him far from satisfactory as a husband; and under such conditions of marital discontent, mothers are only too likely to transfer all their devotion to a son, and to continue their clinging hold upon him till they have rendered him hopelessly dependent.

What has been said is not, of course, intended to imply that everything was accomplished in this family which one could wish to see accomplished. Mrs. Whipple's own health had seemed not very sound. An examination arranged for at a medical clinic resulted in a doubtful diagnosis of exophthalmic goiter and a reference to another clinic to which, despite many reminders and much persuasion, she did not go. Efforts to influence Mr. Whipple to plan for more companionship with his son brought no results; he was too busy, he said—and his hours were in fact long, his homecoming necessarily late. A recommendation regarding an endocrine study of Maurice himself was deliberately set aside because

of fear lest this elaborate procedure should again rivet the boy's attention upon his physique. Six months of work brought results that promised much, but also left much to be desired.

Nor can it be asserted with assurance that the more wholesome interests, the better habits induced in this boy have been built into the permanent structure of his life. Long-continued illness or other disrupting influences may easily, even years hence, throw him back to the childish level from which he seems now to have been lifted; his mother's other interests may fade, ill health or unhappiness may again set her to seeking compensations by absorbing herself in her son's life instead of leaving him free to live his own. Should such relapses astonish us, or lead us to feel that the effort made to promote the mental health of these two was not worth making? In the very young such a reaction is natural; those who have lived long enough to observe the ebb and flow, in themselves and those about them, of the forces that make for growth and for decay, will realize that all one can hope to do for one's fellows, at any given stage of their journey, is to set them on the right path and send them forward hopefully toward the goal that seems to promise most.

FROM FANTASY TO REALITY

A prodigious amount of human unhappiness and maladjustment is due largely to the active pursuit of unattainable goals. It should not offend us too much to have it pointed out to us occasionally that many of our hopes for the careers of our children are by no means entirely altruistic. Frequently enough they reflect largely a desire to find in our children's pursuits and achievements compensation for our own failures and shortcomings.

BERNARD GLUECK, M.D.,

Constructive Possibilities of a Mental Hygiene of Childhood.

IN one of New York's high-grade department stores an Italian girl of nineteen—small, attractive, with a Madonna-like face—has been working for two years past. Her chief says, "If only I had four or five other girls like Rosina, my troubles would be over!" Beginning with certain simple mechanical tasks, the girl has risen, not to any dazzling heights indeed, but to a minor executive post in which she has several girls working under her direction, and comes in contact with large numbers of other employees. She is equally remarkable for her promptness, regularity, and conscientiousness, on the one hand, and for her gracious manners, on the other. Scarcely a day passes that several people do not comment to her superior on Rosina's helpful, courteous ways. She is popular with other girls, is friendly and sociable, attends store dances, and goes about, after working hours, with a group of four jolly pals.

If we were to meet this attractive young woman it would not occur to us to suspect that four years ago she had been a shut-in, unhappy child, absorbed in memories and in day-dreams of an impossible future, who was the despair of her

teachers. Rosina's story is, from several points of view, of sufficient interest to make a brief review of it here seem worth while.

She was the first child of parents who, after knowing one another from childhood in a small Italian town, had been married as young adults soon after coming to this country. Mr. Sapotto had received a better-than-average education, and had hoped to take up semi-professional work for which he was especially trained. His first venture in this line failing, he had gone into the fruit and vegetable business. His wife worked with him faithfully in their small store, while her mother took care of the children as they came along. Rosina was not born till Mr. and Mrs. Sapotto had been several years married, but a brother and two sisters followed at intervals of from one to four years. The father was never really successful, failing several times and having to set up shop in a new locality with a burden of debt; still, he managed to provide a comfortable home. He was a retiring, rather delicate-appearing man, who never joined any of the Italian societies, or mingled much with other men, but "lived between his shop and his home."

Devoted to all his family, Mr. Sapotto adored his eldest daughter. Often he would take her face between his hands and after gazing long into it would remark, "She is the very image of my mother." Rosina, thus loved for her grandmother's sake as well as for her own by the one parent, was also the other's favorite. From infancy till she was nearly twelve she experienced as completely satisfying a love-life as a child well could. Then her father died.

It was more than three years after this event that the child guidance clinic made Rosina's acquaintance. She had been referred as a health and educational problem by the visiting teacher of the school she attended. During the

past year she had been absent most of the time because of "probably imaginary ailments." When she did come she was more than likely to beg, with tears in her eyes, to be allowed to go home early on account of some ache or pain. Her mother had taken her to many physicians, none of whom could find anything the matter with her. She was given to fits of weeping for her dead father, and refused to have any part in the social life of the school. Her classmates considered her "queer" and "old," and let her alone. Her teachers, who had all along been interested and sympathetic, were beginning to lose patience and to suspect this exemplary pupil, whose conduct had always been A, of truancy and deceitfulness, since after getting herself excused from school she had been seen in neighboring stores. The teacher who knew her best said that Rosina before her father's death had been of a "bright, sunny" disposition, but was now "quiet as a mouse and a regular little old woman." So extreme were the girl's shyness and timidity that her teachers seldom called upon her to recite. Despite all these unfavorable items, she had reached the ninth grade and her work, when she did attend, was fairly good.

At this time Rosina was described as "a sad-faced but very sweet and angelic looking youngster." In the first long talk held with her at the clinic she stated that she felt pretty well as a rule except during the menstrual period, when she suffered severe pain. Menstruation had begun on the day following her father's death. She had been more fond of her father than of any one else in the world, even her mother, and had never felt the same since he died. "I am always sad. I feel wicked if I go where they are having a good time, I feel as if I were committing a sin. I can't bear to go to a party or hear a piano. He used to love the piano." Her eyes filled with tears at every mention of her father. She

often lost herself in day-dreams about him, and once had thought she heard his voice—though she no longer believed, she said, that it had really been his. According to her relatives she ate scarcely anything and would sit for hours at the window, brooding and staring into space. When interviewed she displayed little interest in any subject. Clearly she was in danger of losing touch with reality. The psychiatrist saw in her a possible “pre-dementia præcox case”—one that, under unfavorable conditions, might easily develop into actual mental disease.

Talks with Mrs. Sapotto threw much light upon her daughter's condition and its causes. The mother had apparently never rallied from the loss of her husband; they had been a devoted couple, and whereas during his lifetime she had been a practical, capable helpmate to him, she now spent much of her time in futile wailings and lamentings over her unhappy fate, and in endless fussing over her daughter's health. She was superstitious, and believed that she had several times since his death seen Mr. Sapotto or heard his voice. She had various physical ailments, and was not inclined to make light of them; “Oh Lord, make me sick for a few days so I can rest and be quiet!” she wailed, in one of her first talks with the clinic worker. Her struggle had indeed been a hard one, with a widow's pension as sole income and four youngsters to rear. She had endeavored to do her duty, and in some respects had managed well, but had made the mistake of dwelling constantly upon the past, thus encouraging the children to intensify and prolong unduly their mourning for their father. Life in the home was serious and sad, normal childish gaiety hardly existed, and every symptom of physical ill health was greeted as a probable harbinger of fresh trouble. The children were encouraged to stay home from school on the slightest of pretexts, and

Rosina was not permitted to do any work about the house.

While this morbid hothouse atmosphere was clearly responsible for a part of the eldest daughter's trouble, it was not held to account for all of it. The physician at the clinic did not agree with the girl's teachers that her ailments were entirely imaginary; dysmenorrhea he believed was actually a factor in the case, and he instituted glandular treatment which appeared greatly to relieve it. At the same time, however, he vigorously undertook the reeducation of mother and daughter in health matters. Mrs. Sapotto was told that she was definitely harming instead of helping her child by her constant solicitude; her morbid fears were quite unjustified, and were leading Rosina to serious behavior difficulties. The girl could not be protected all along the line, she must learn to go out and face the world. It was the mother's duty to help her to be more self-reliant, less dependent and less ready to give in to every indisposition. Rosina herself was urged to go to school despite her discomforts; if, it was pointed out, she should carry over her present habit of constantly giving up from her school life into her work life, she would never be able to hold a job. An effort was also made to draw her out of herself and lead her to take an active interest in things and people: her father would not want her to make a recluse of herself!

The effectiveness of such frank urging of common sense principles is of course largely dependent upon the authority vested in the urger and the regard in which he is held. In the present instance the physician had speedily become, to his forlorn little patient and her equally forlorn mother, a tower of strength and wisdom. To the girl he came to stand, in some degree, as a father substitute—a relationship which her mother's faith in him helped to solidify. Almost im-

mediately Rosina's school attendance began to improve, and her spirits to brighten. Soon she was ready to acknowledge that she no longer felt it a duty to be sad and solitary, that it was really her shyness, her dread of new contacts, that was keeping her from mingling with other young people. From this time on signs of better social adjustment appeared with encouraging frequency. Thus, about three months after treatment began, Mrs. Sapotto one day burst forth: "My God, she change so, you wouldn't know her! Now she go with girls, go on street, and eat good. Yesterday, oh how she eat. Me glad." And again, after another interval of some months, "My God, how the doctor make Rosina better! I think it was answer to my prayers. The doctor he so good, just like piece of bread." During this period the acute illness of one of the younger children had given the girl a chance to show what she could do, and, though herself suffering from a severe cold, she had cooked and cleaned and "been the support of them all." Her next younger sister about the same time added her testimony: "Rosina talks and smiles and tries to make us laugh. Before, she used to cry all the time."

In the process of weaning Rosina from her unwholesome habits of withdrawal and brooding an important part was played by one of the clinic social workers, who persuaded her to open the piano she had not touched since her father's death and for several months gave her weekly piano lessons. These, in addition to their direct effect in reviving a former interest that made for pleasure and refreshment, gave opportunity for natural growth of acquaintance and for influencing mother as well as daughter toward more normal living. The efforts of the physician in his less frequent contacts were thus reinforced and extended.

A phase of Rosina's mental life not yet touched upon was

bound up with dreams of the future which she and her father had built up together, and which she had continued to cherish as part of her life with him. She was to follow either the line of work for which he had himself been trained, and which he had been forced to abandon, or was to rise to even greater heights attained by an uncle in Italy, and become a member of one of the learned professions. This second alternative was the one that had come to be favored by Rosina and her mother. Doubt as to the capacity of the child to pursue to a successful conclusion such arduous and long-continued studies as were involved seems never to have entered the heads of any of the Sapotto family; nor did any incongruity between Rosina's timid, shrinking nature and the demands of the chosen profession for aggressive public action seem ever to have struck them. Even the fact that Mrs. Sapotto's pension was to be reduced on Rosina's sixteenth birthday and that no substitute was in sight—though this misfortune was frequently lamented by the mother—seemed in no way to affect the plans which she and her daughter clung to with equal tenacity. Rosina was to go through high school and through college; that program had been laid down long ago and nothing was to be permitted to interfere with its being carried through.

Of course there have been instances not a few where able boys and girls, in families just as poor as the Sapottos, have obtained a college education and achieved noteworthy success in one professional field or another. Rosina, however, was in no way equipped for such a struggle as theirs. Study at the clinic had revealed, among other facts, that her intelligence was of the grade known as dull-normal.¹ Thus far she had maintained her position in school by dint of excep-

¹ A retest made two years later confirmed these findings; though her intelligence quotient was then six points higher, it was still well below the lower limit of the average.

tionally long hours spent on home work, but it was evident that she had about reached her limit of advancement. It therefore became a part of the clinic's task to persuade her and her mother to abandon their impractical plans and accept others that might be carried into effect. Evidently it was desirable, for the girl's sake and for the sake of the family as a whole, that she become a worker as soon as possible. But this end must of course be achieved without destroying such confidence as the child had in her own powers, and without unnecessary assault upon the family pride.

The positive half of this task, the interesting of Rosina in a possible business career which would enable her to help her family, proved not so difficult after all. For her final year in elementary school she was transferred to a commercial course. This did not however mean the immediate abandonment of her dreams, for she began to talk of continuing her education by attending night school while working. After several months' trial she was obliged to abandon stenography as too difficult for her. This she does not seem to have felt as a severe disappointment, and the experience may have helped her to realize other limitations. At any rate, by the time she graduated from elementary school at sixteen she had abandoned all idea of going to high school, apparently without any profound regret, and had made up her mind to seek work at once.

Mrs. Sapotto, meanwhile, had seemingly been won over, too. Yet when the girl came home with her first offer of a job, one in the packing department of a large concern, the mother reacted according to long-established habits of thought. It was not for such work that her daughter had been educated—Rosina should not take it! And she didn't.

Months of fruitless search followed, the clinic aiding. In

the end, a position was accepted which was of much the same character as the one originally refused; but by this time Mrs. Sapotto had become reconciled to the inevitable, and Rosina's enthusiasm for her firm and for the associations it brought her was speedily communicated to her mother. The engagement had been temporary only, and it was through the efforts of the clinic—backed, of course, by her own good record—that Rosina was later taken back on a permanent basis. To the Sapottos, paradise was regained! It is hard to realize, amid their rejoicings over the reestablished connection, that this is the same family which, so short a time before, had been dreaming impossible dreams and refusing to face inescapable realities.

The Sapotto family history here briefly sketched furnishes illustrations of not a few points discussed in the chapters of Part I. The way in which a too intense and exclusive devotion to a particular child may limit that child's development and unfit him or her for wider social contacts is well shown. This father's identification of his daughter first with his mother, then with himself, seems largely to explain on the one hand his special devotion, on the other his drive to have her succeed in his place, make good where he had failed, and thus justify his existence. His lack of outside contacts and complete concentration of interest in the home had clearly prepared his family as a whole to react as they did following his death; if the husband and father they missed had set a standard of wider sympathies and a more outgoing, friendly spirit, such a state of morbid emotionalism as they displayed could hardly have come into existence, still less endured for over three years. As it was, the loyalty which led mother and children to hold his image constantly before their eyes stamped his familiar behavior patterns of

withdrawal and ingrowing domesticity upon their minds even more effectively than his living presence had done.

With all the current criticism of American parents for their absorption in interests outside the home to the neglect of their children, it may surprise the reader that the present volume contains so few references to such situations, so many to situations of the opposite type in which a child is hampered by parental over-attention. Assuredly, this does not mean that in the clinic's view children are often, or may ever be, too well loved. Nor would it cover the situation to say that the love of many parents is self-seeking, for all love, including the parental, has its self-seeking aspect. Rather is it a question of what type of satisfaction the self seeks, beyond the longing for response which may be assumed to be universal. The parent who can find his keenest pleasure in the growing sturdiness and independence and widening horizon of his child is building solidly for the future.

From the point of view both of health and of social attitudes, Rosina's recovery repays study. Though her mother insisted that up to the time of her father's death the child had always been well, other near relatives declared that while yet very young she had been accustomed to get her own way with her father and mother by crying and saying she felt ill. Whether in those earlier years there had been a physical basis for her complaints we do not know; according to an aunt she was always "nervous" and lacked appetite. Her teachers and the physicians to whom her mother had taken her were however mistaken in believing that the pains of which she complained at fifteen were wholly imaginary, and all the school's efforts to deal with her on that basis had proved ineffective. How far her rapid improvement under the guidance of the clinic physician was due to the glandular treatment administered, how far to his efforts to change her

attitudes, it is impossible to say; probably neither procedure would have been so effective without the other. At last accounts, the girl had so completely recovered both in mind and body as to be remarkable for the very traits—punctuality, regularity—in which when first known she had been conspicuously weak.

On the social side Rosina only very gradually emerged from her shell. Despite her mother's early enthusiasm over the change wrought in her, she was still a noticeably shy, retiring girl up to the time of her graduation from school, and even during her first year of employment it was difficult for her to mingle freely with her fellow-workers. The completely happy adjustment which she seems finally to have made is probably due in great part to the excellent store management under which she works and the kindly, tactful efforts of her superior to bring her out.

THE FAMILY TEMPER

Hate and antagonism to authority are exemplified perhaps most typically by the conflict between the boy and his father If the father . . . is an unusually unjust, severe, and cruel parent . . . there may be an exaggerated reaction of hate which may determine a character trend which will ever afterwards be arrayed against all authority whether embodied in some individual, or, more abstractly, in the law and the functions of the State generally

WILLIAM A. WHITE, M.D.,
The Mental Hygiene of Childhood.

ERIC OWEN was referred to the clinic by one of his teachers in part-time high school because of his "unnatural, ungovernable temper." The latest of a long series of outbursts had led, some months earlier, to his expulsion from junior high. An appeal for his reinstatement, made by his mother, had failed, and by arrangement of the vice-principal he had been placed in part-time school with the understanding that he was to go to work.

The history of this fifteen-year-old boy which the clinic gathered together from eleven different sources was a sombre and threatening one.

It begins with the migration to America, fifty years before, of Powys Owen, Eric's grandfather. Powys, then a middle-aged school teacher, had been all but mobbed by the parents of his pupils on account of his cruelty. When he appealed to the government authorities because of threats made against his life, it was suggested that he leave for America. This he did, and settled on a small farm in Pennsylvania, where he lived, in excellent health, until his death more than

forty years later. His wife, who was of a kind, sweet disposition, succumbed to cancer of the stomach before half this time had passed.

Five sons and daughters survived their parents. All carried with them, as they left the family rooftree to found new homes, indelibly imprinted memories of the brutal beatings to which they and their mother had been subjected. All, according to Eric's father, had "insane tempers." Mr. Owen added, indeed, that they all controlled these tempers—but since he included himself in this generalization, the reader is permitted to doubt its accuracy.

Eric's father, now a man of over sixty, was an expert mechanic who earned good wages when he worked. Up to about the age of thirty he had been steadily employed and had made good progress. Then he became emotionally involved in a sympathetic strike, joined a group of radicals, and lost his job. He was forced to leave home in search of work. He had been married only a year or two before, and this seems to have been the turning point in his domestic as well as his industrial career. Since then he had shifted about a great deal, journeying from point to point throughout the east and middle west in search of work. Many of these changes of habitat had followed his discharge on suspicion of dishonesty; wherever he went he apparently allied himself with groups that were more or less suspect. Though the police department in the city where the clinic was located had no record against him, and though at the time of the study he was a union member in good standing, his exceedingly chequered career, even as reported by himself, left little doubt that some at least of the irregularities he was accused of must actually lie at his door. He denied ever having been imprisoned; his wife declared that he had once spent six weeks in jail.

In view of this record, it is surprising to learn that Eric had always lived in the same house—a comfortable, well-furnished six-room cottage, with a well-kept yard, which had been purchased by Mr. Owen soon after the boy's birth. An older married sister, with her husband and baby, now lived with Eric and his mother and shared expenses.

The boy's physical environment had thus been stable. It was the only feature of his life to which this term could be applied.

Mrs. Owen, now in the late fifties, was an American by birth and parentage. Her father, according to her account, had been a man of happy disposition who never worried and who enjoyed good health until a few years before his death, when he developed a cancer. Her mother had suffered most of her life from heart disease, but had survived her husband nearly twenty years. She had been of a nervous, worrying temperament. Mrs. Owen's only brother and only other near relative had also died recently; he had been a quiet, even-tempered man. Regarding Mrs. Owen's girlhood we know little except that she graduated from high school, and that from the age of sixteen she was subject to sick headaches.

These headaches in earlier years occurred only occasionally after an unusually hard day's work or a late party. With the second year of her marriage, however, they began to be frequent and very severe—sharp, racking pains accompanied by nausea, occurring two or three days a week. They had continued unabated until about two years ago, but were now less frequent.

In addition, Mrs. Owen had gone through one serious illness, called by her a "nervous breakdown." Of this she said: "I got it into my head that Mr. Owen was plotting against me. He told my mother that I was crazy and had to be put away. I cried most of the time and stayed in

bed. Dr. Dole cared for me. He can tell you what condition I was in."

This breakdown occurred early in her pregnancy with her last child, Eric. The mother stated frankly that she had not wanted another baby, and was cross and ugly during this period. Also, during these months her husband several times abused her brutally.

Thus we come to the central family situation.

Of the circumstances of the marriage between Mr. and Mrs. Owen we are told nothing, nor do we know at what point in their married life disharmony began—though an early onset is suggested by the history of excessive headaches dating from their second year together. Each acknowledged having a violent temper, but each held the other primarily to blame for their difficulties. The woman enlarged upon the man's dishonesty; she asserted that he had slapped her, kicked her, knocked her down. He declared that she had made life a purgatory for him—he "never had as much home as a rabbit"; she would hit him over the head with anything she could lay hands on. The family never took any recreation together, and the parents seem to have differed on most vital questions. Thus Mrs. Owen was a Republican, her husband a Socialist; she took the children to church, he bought Socialist books to give his boys. He accused her before the children of infidelity, naming her physician. She asserted that he had brought stolen goods to store at the house, and had tried to force their eldest boy into helping him bring home these articles, beating him unmercifully. He never showed any affection for the children, treated them brutally, pulling the ears of the three older ones until they were sore and bleeding. He, on his side, asserted that he was never allowed to discipline the children, that his wife threatened to cut off his ears if he interfered

with her management of them. According to both parents the home life had been a series of quarrels and out-and-out physical fights, during which the children were always present.

Apparently the birth of Eric and the purchase of the home marked a turn in the tide of parental relations, for the following year, when Mr. Owen got into one of his perennial unpleasantnesses with his employers and abruptly decided on a journey of several hundred miles in search of a new job, his wife refused to accompany him. Later when he asked her to join him in a third city she again refused. A few years after this they separated, with a legal agreement that Mrs. Owen should occupy the house, Mr. Owen retaining one room for use when in town and paying fifteen dollars a month toward the support of each minor child. The mother took in washing and sewing, the older boys worked and contributed, and so they got along. According to Mrs. Owen, although they worked hard they were happier than ever before.

How often Mr. Owen dropped in upon his family during the next eight years is not recorded, but at the end of that period he one day put in an appearance. His wife greeted him by exclaiming, "Why don't you stay away? We are happy when you are gone!" Mr. Owen reminded her that the following day was her birthday; he was bringing her a present, he said—a big surprise. Next day she was served with divorce papers—the ground, desertion.

She did not contest the case, and in due time a decree was granted. The father was to pay her fifteen dollars a month so long as Eric should remain in school (the other children were by now all of age); and until the boy should be eighteen, but only until then, she could continue to occupy the house. Mr. Owen fully expected, he said, that before she would resign it to him she would burn it down, as she had threatened to do.

It is interesting to note that of two professional men who had been in the Owen home repeatedly over a series of years one held the husband accountable for family difficulties, the other, the wife. Said Dr. Dole, an osteopath who had frequently treated Mrs. Owen: "I have seen Owen chase the boys with a club as large as a man's arm. He was a regular demon when angry. She is a fine, sweet woman when 'at herself,' but owing to her miserable husband's treatment she is not always 'at herself.'" Said Dr. Murray, a physician who had treated various members of the family for slight illnesses: "Mrs. Owen is erratic, high-strung, excitable. I am sure there is a mild insanity. Husband once thought he would have to send her to a sanatorium. I was always sorry for him. Have heard rumors that he was not always square in business, but thought anything was excusable if he had to live with her. He always appeared to me to be non-excitable and docile in spite of her statements to the contrary."

Another bit of evidence regarding Mrs. Owen came from the principal of one of the public schools. Some years ago Eric had been transferred to his school, but had not put in an appearance, so he called. "I asked the lady who came to the door if Mrs. Owen was in. She said no, the Owens had moved, she believed they had left town, but could give no information about them. I then said, 'I am from the school, and am interested in one of their boys.' 'Oh,' she said, 'Come on in! I am Mrs. Owen, I thought you were a collector.'"

Both these erratic and unreliable parents were seen by the clinic visitor. Mrs. Owen met her caller with a rather stern, forbidding manner. When the occasion of the visit was explained, she responded, "Well, come on in. I don't see why we need to go into this when I know Eric's only trouble

is a temper inherited from both his father and me, but if this will get him back in school I am willing, though it will probably give me such a headache that I won't sleep a mite tonight." During the interview she wept frequently, wrung her hands and twisted her apron, rocked back and forth violently in her chair, walked about the room. Her other children must not know she had let Eric go to the clinic, she said—they would be very angry if they knew she had told all the family history. Both her grown-up sons contributed to her support; but Eric was her baby, her favorite child; she would do anything for him.

Mr. Owen also wept during the interview with the clinic worker, once as he told of his unhappy home life, again as he compared his present economic status with that of earlier years. He was a tall, stooped man, clean and quiet appearing, with leathery skin and rough, knarled hands. He had married again, a few months after obtaining his divorce; the present Mrs. Owen was a large, placid-looking woman, who, to judge from the condition of their apartment, was an excellent housekeeper. His one fear was that he might be required to take Eric to live with him; this would break up his home, which was, he said, quite happy.

Such was Eric's background. What of Eric himself?

According to his mother, despite her distressing mental state during pregnancy her physical health had been good. Eric's birth and development were normal, and after he had recovered from a four months' period of colic he was not a fretful baby. As a young child he had various children's diseases, but not, apparently, with any complications or after-effects.

At five an accident befell him which gives us a glimpse into the home at that period. One of his elder brothers broke a

dish, and his mother in anger picked up the pieces and threw them across the room. One piece hit Eric on the temple and caused a "compound depressed fracture." He was rushed to a hospital, operated upon, and held there three days. Apparently no serious consequences followed this accident, as there was no later history of symptoms or findings on examination that could be traced to the injury.

Eric entered school at the age of six, and except for one half-year which he missed because his mother took him on a visit to her childhood's home, he had attended most of the time since. Counting a socialist school in which he had spent half a year, he had been enrolled in seven different schools. From three of these his record was obtained.

The principal of the elementary school which he had first attended stated that he had made normal progress until he was ten and in the fourth grade. When he was in the third grade, however, she had begun to "hear about" him. He had temper tantrums and was constantly being sent to the office; he was morose and grouchy, always had a chip on his shoulder. On one occasion he scratched the teacher with his finger nails; he would stick his pen into her or into the children as they passed by. If he was whipped he held a grudge and was surly and cross for a day or so. Finally one day, in the fourth grade, his teacher caught him cheating and reprimanded him. He replied, "Don't you talk to me." She told him to go to the office. He refused. She started toward him. He drew his knife and took a step to meet her, saying over and over again, "Don't you touch me." This seemed too direct a threat to be disregarded, and the principal had the boy transferred to a special school where a man was in charge. Here he was regarded as having a "nasty temper" but did not cause any particular trouble. The principal considered him "a bully and a coward."

Three years later, after he had tried three other schools from which we have no report, Eric went of his own accord to the principal of the school he had first attended and plead to be taken back. The principal said of this interview: "He had grown to be such a nice-appearing boy that I thought we would overlook past records." She placed him in the sixth grade. He behaved himself until the second semester, then began to show bad temper and would refuse to do his work or to cooperate in any way. "After each refusal he would apologize, but this apology was only from the teeth out. He would commit the same offense the next day." That spring he was placed in an adjustment room where he did such poor work that he could not be promoted. He attended summer school, however, made up the work, and next fall entered junior high.

Here the vice-principal already knew Eric; she had met him three years before when he was delivering goods for a neighboring store. At that time he had told her "I'm just working my head off to get into Lambert High"—her school. When he finally came to her, she found he was not well up in mathematics, so she arranged to give him individual help and encouragement. "He is a boy who has to have encouragement." She arranged for him to skip geography, of which he had a good knowledge, and take history; and she put him in an advanced English class. "When he worked he produced creditable results, but his work was 'spurdy.'"

In this school he was circulation manager for the school paper. Said the English teacher: "He managed it excellently. He advertised it, giving very sound, valuable points to students as to why they should support it. He took subscriptions, some of which were on the installment plan. These he always collected at the time agreed upon.

He had a systematic way of handling things, and seemed to have a sense of responsibility in the home."

During the fall when he entered junior high he was twice given the Terman group test. The first time he received a rating that placed him in the dull-normal group, the second time he reached the average level. The teacher who gave the tests attributed the difference in ratings to emotional instability. She said that he "showed unusual ability to change in a minute from a disgruntled, ugly mood, to a happy, cheery one."

The events which led up to the boy's expulsion from junior high were thus recounted by the teacher in whose room they occurred: "One day they were having a test and Eric copied from the girl in front of him. . . . I talked to the class about honesty, not mentioning any specific case. After class Eric came to me and said he would be square, was sorry he cheated. He asked if he might move his seat. I allowed him to do so. The next day he threw a note at a girl. I asked him to pick up the note and bring it to me. He picked it up, but said, 'I can't give it to you, Miss Holden.' Later he was successful in passing the note to the girl. When I spoke to him about it he was very rude and ugly. I sent him out of the class. Later in the afternoon he came and attempted to apologize to me. I said he must apologize before the class. The next morning he did this and the apology was accepted." In the evening the girl to whom he wrote the note jibed him about being a sissy. He took exception to the remark and dared her to hit him. She slapped him, then he slapped her. The principal expelled him, saying he would not have a boy in his school who would strike a girl, even in self-defense, and refused to recommend him to any other junior high school. Later the vice-principal arranged for him to enter part-time school.

The note, later given by the girl to the teacher, was described by the latter as "coarse and vulgar."

This was not the only occasion on which Eric had shown an interest in girls. He would hang around to watch them play tennis or rehearse a play, was very flirtatious in his manner, and given to running into them or touching them as he passed. They were correspondingly interested in him.

As to his tastes, Eric enjoyed movies and vaudeville, and was inclined to hero-worship of Valentino and other screen stars. He was very particular about his personal appearance—something of a dandy, in fact. An elder brother who was a travelling man sent him many partly worn suits which were adapted to his use, thus making it possible for him to cut quite a figure among his mates. Once he wore a pair of gray suede gloves to school, and kept them on until the teacher noticed them, saying how pretty they were. He was careful to keep the source of his clothes supply a secret. He was interested in the family tree on his mother's side, and boasted that they could trace their ancestors back to the Mayflower. He was fond of reading; Zane Grey and Stewart Edward White were among his favorite authors. He loved music. He was not especially athletic, but enjoyed swimming and would like to play golf, if he had the clubs.

Eric had worked after hours and on Saturdays for two years past as delivery boy, turning over his earnings to his mother. His employer said he was honest and industrious, but had an ugly disposition. He had also caddied at the golf links—a line which his mother did not wish him to follow, as she felt the association with rich men there was bad for him. He had not yet obtained his working papers, though he had applied for them; had failed to land one prospective job on account of his surly manner.

His teachers in general believed that Eric appreciated the value of an education and was interested in getting it, but was too mature socially for his grade, the seventh, and was humiliated by this. He was a natural leader; many a noon hour saw him the center of a group of ninth grade boys on the playground, proudly recounting his exploits in a manner that never failed to hold their attention and interest.

Eric's first afternoon at the clinic was a stormy one. He had evidently come unwillingly, and when summoned for the physical examination refused to enter the examining room and started to walk away, declaring "No Jew is going to examine me," and "when I don't want to do anything I don't do it." The director of the clinic, who was passing through the waiting room, engaged him in conversation, explaining what had been his teacher's idea in referring him to the clinic and what study there might mean to him. The interest which the teacher felt in him was dwelt upon, and this seemed the point which chiefly impressed the boy. He returned with the physician and submitted to examination by him, though somewhat sulkily and protestingly.

He proved to be two inches over height and fourteen pounds over weight—a big, rather good-looking chap, normally developed for his age and well nourished. In general his muscles were well developed, but his abdomen was somewhat pendulous. A peculiarity in his heart action and a question as to possible obstruction of the nasal passages called for further examination. Weight reduction through diet and exercise was the one immediate issue to be taken up with the boy himself.

Having completed his examination, the physician turned the boy over to the psychologist.

Though he had submitted thus far, Eric was evidently not yet reconciled to the clinic procedure. He entered the psychologist's room with a sullen air and announced that "no one could examine him." He further threw out, "There's nothing the matter with me. It's all crazy my being here and losing six dollars that I could make on the links today." He declared that he hadn't had a square deal in school, hadn't a friend in the world, and didn't want any intimate friends—he was afraid a friend might "double cross" him. This he volunteered with considerable emotion.

He was persuaded to try the tests and gradually became less antagonistic. When the psychologist explained that every one at the clinic wanted to help him—and especially help him "get something off his chest"—he declared that nobody in the world would ever know what he thought about, and broke out crying. After this outburst a splendid contact was established and the boy was very cooperative throughout the rest of the examination period.

Eric rated as average in general intelligence and in educational achievement. It was evident that he was graded in school two and one-half years below his mental age and two years below the highest grade the work of which he could do. He did rather poorly on the mechanical tests, but seemed to have a special ability for fine hand-work which might possibly fit him to do engraving, carving, or watch making.

The outstanding feature of the psychologist's report was, however, the emphasis he placed upon Eric's emotional disturbances. These he thought might well account for the boy's being graded below his proper level, as well as for all his other difficulties. What Eric most needed, the psychologist felt, was a confidant.

The first step in treatment was the meeting of this need. The psychiatric interview furnished the opportunity. Two

days after his interview with the psychologist Eric was once more at the clinic, closeted with the psychiatrist—the same physician who had given him the physical examination. Evidently the boy's reflections upon his earlier experiences had led to a change of front, and the doctor's easy, informal manner, his way of meeting him on his own level and treating him with the respect due a young man, confirmed him in the new attitude.

The interview began with some further explanation by the physician of the various parts of the study, particularly the social investigation. In the course of this, the boy's father was naturally referred to. At the mention of his name, Eric flushed and showed a marked emotional reaction. His father was crazy, he declared, and ought to be locked up; he had never been much at home since Eric could remember, but on the occasions when he did appear he had been very cruel, beating the mother and pulling the children's ears. Whenever he joked he hurt your feelings. Several years ago he had been divorced from the mother; he had married again, a woman whom the boy would never like; he expected his sons to support him; he wanted the mother and Eric to move out of the house so he and his new wife could move in. To be sure he couldn't turn them out until Eric was eighteen, but he had done almost as bad, he had come recently when the family were out and had carried off the piano, on which Eric was taking lessons. This last indignity seemed to have brought the boy's feelings to the boiling point; he had no respect for anyone like his father—his father was "mean, crooked, an I. W. W."

The physician responded to this outpouring in a manner highly satisfactory to the boy; he appeared as astonished and shocked as any teller of such a tale could wish. Certainly, he commented, nobody in his right mind could pos-

sibly behave so. It was evident that Mr. Owen suffered from a distorted personality; that he was not entirely responsible for some things he did.

This was agreeing with Eric; it was echoing his own assertion that his father was crazy—yet with a difference. The suggestion that the man was a victim of forces beyond his own control subtly found its way into the boy's mind. To think with contempt of the parent who should be his model-of-all-the-virtues cannot but be exquisitely painful to any youngster; to find that another envisages that parent not as a willful evil-doer but as a pitiable sufferer may ease a conflict as disrupting as any that can rend a young life.

From his father Eric passed on to talk of his mother, with whom he lived. She liked all three of her sons, he said: "She was kind-hearted and willing to be good to all who were good to her, but she didn't want any one meddling in her business." It was evident that the boy was wholly committed to the maternal side in the family controversy. The physician accepted without question what he offered.

The talk turned to school experiences. In the main Eric's story followed the outline already obtained from official sources; but there were important differences in emphasis. He rehearsed the early episode of drawing his knife when he was caught cheating, but declared that he had no intention of stabbing the teacher, that if she had come a step nearer he would have run. After this affair he had never completed a year in any school until the last two years; the intervening irregularities he laid to travelling and sickness. He took a great deal of pride in his success as circulation manager of the school paper. His account of the episode of the past winter which led to his expulsion from junior high did not differ materially from that of his teacher though the girl in the case had called him not only "sissy" but "coward"

and appeared to have been a trifle more aggressive. He was anxious to get back and finish the ninth grade at least, high school if possible.

He had felt a great deal that people were against him, especially in school—the pupils and teachers. Still, he didn't really blame the schools for his trouble; he realized that the fault was his, that he had an evil temper, a "crazy temper." Some of the teachers had taken an interest in him, had helped him—he appreciated that fact; they were about the only friends he had. He couldn't, however, forgive the principal of junior high, and thought this man shouldn't be in the schools. "He spoke out once, said to me, 'I never did like your family.'" This Eric took as a reflection on his father, also on his brothers who had given some trouble in their day. Another time this same principal commented that Eric's father had never given him any attention. The boy bitterly resented the disparaging attitude indicated by these remarks. It was evident that they had further accentuated his already profound feeling of inferiority about his family.

As to the other fellows, some of them liked him, some didn't. He had got into trouble through trying to "bluff" smaller boys. He had very few friends on account of his "acting so foolish and getting rough." He had never cared much for gym or track athletics, but thought he would like boxing, rowing, and football. Didn't care more for one sex than the other—liked boys and girls about "fifty-fifty." Had one special girl friend who had gone south; she was the only one he had ever taken out. As to social affairs, "Guess I can't behave at parties either. Guess they don't want me and I don't want to go." Had been in a good many scraps—always able to hold his own, though he had been beaten, once; there's always a better one than yourself, but the only

time he'd been licked was when a fellow hit him below the belt. Some of the fights started with the boys calling him names—"sissy," "sheik"; that got him. "Once a Jew—I never did like a Jew—I had a scrap with this Jew; I was plain wild—I couldn't see anyone but that Jew." This fight had started with the other boy's calling him some such name. He didn't mind when the fellows he liked did this—he laughed; but he wouldn't take it from the new fellows, they "got his goat."

Why did they call him these names? Well, probably because he wore good clothes; maybe they thought he didn't want to get his clothes mussed. Maybe it was partly because he hadn't taken much part in athletics, hadn't mixed much with the other fellows. Maybe he talked sissy. They called him "mother's boy" and "teacher's pet," too. He knew he carried a chip on his shoulder—always on the defensive; usually he kept quiet and sulked, once in a while he exploded. Wished he could get away from his temper outbursts, be more sociable and able to laugh the way others did—be better, and different—especially different from his father.

Thus the trail led back to the great central fact in the boy's life: he had a father whom neither he nor others could respect. It was evident that he felt very keenly on this score.

Trial shafts sunk here and there by the psychiatrist brought up little of significance. Eric admitted having masturbated for a few weeks a year or so ago; he understood that the habit made one weak, and stopped it. He admitted having felt sex impulses, but denied ever having entered into sex relations with any one. He had no serious complaint of a physical nature. He ate rather irregularly because of his work, which had recently been mostly at the golf course; would snatch a sandwich as he could, with a

drink of pop or coffee. Usually slept well from nine to six-thirty or seven. Occasionally went to a show, generally alone; sometimes took his mother, a few times had taken the girl friend who had moved away. He did a good deal of day-dreaming about what he'd do if he were rich like the people he saw at the golf club; often when he was caddying he got "bawled out" for passing up a golf ball because of his day-dreaming.

Eric's initial experiences at the clinic have been gone into thus at length because his reactions in the various examinations revealed so much of his inner conflict. Treatment, which continued only about six months, when the clinic in this city was closed, had two main objectives.

First came the objective of changing the boy's attitudes—toward his father primarily, toward school authorities and associates, toward life in general. Since Eric had been brought to talk himself out, there seemed ground for hope that through the confidential relationship established he might be reached and influenced. Second was the objective of reestablishing him in school and ensuring a better adjustment there. These two aims were pursued simultaneously, the one by means of clinic interviews, the other largely through contacts with the school and the boy. Only the briefest summary of methods and results can here be given.

Since it was evident that Eric's feeling of resentment and bitterness toward his father underlay all his outbreaks against those in authority, an effort was made, in line with the suggestions offered in the first interview, to get the boy to see that it would be well if he could look upon his father as a sick man; once he formed the habit of doing this, he would not be so upset by things that couldn't be helped. Mr. Owen's life history was gone over in order to point

out how the man's unrestrained emotionalism had again and again got him into trouble and was fundamentally responsible for all the misfortunes which had befallen him. Eric was only too accustomed to having his resemblances to his father pointed out; but here the emphasis was upon the constructive aspects of the situation. Was he going to let himself be the prey of his emotions, as his father had been? Was he going to permit his angers and resentments to pile up until they drove him into anti-social acts so serious that his career would be wrecked? Eric seemed fully to grasp the point and agreed that he would try to get away from the bitterness which he had long held against his father.

The question of the boy's relation to his mother—a far more delicate one to handle—was approached indirectly by way of a discussion of an operation on the nose recommended by a specialist to whom he had been sent by the clinic. Eric was at first disposed merely to put the question of having this operation up to his mother. It was suggested that, since he was growing up, he might well assume some responsibility for thinking such matters out himself instead of referring everything to her. This started him off. He felt very definitely, it appeared, that his mother had always petted him too much, and at the same time that she was restricting him unduly. She didn't want him even to dance, and was constantly haranguing him about minor things. For example, because he went once or twice to play pool—one of the few interests he had—she called him a "pool-room rat." Disciplinary methods carried over from childhood days seemed to him no longer appropriate; he was exceedingly restive under her constant curbing of his activities. At the same time his loyalty to his mother was evident, and he showed so strong a disinclination to discuss her mental peculiarities that it was thought best not to attempt

to take this problem up specifically. The psychiatrist emphasized the general principle that increasing age should bring widening independence and suggested that quiet assumption of responsibility for personal comings and goings without too much talk of things done or planned was the best policy; there was no need of hurting his mother's feelings or stirring up unnecessary conflict.

Changes in such fundamental relationships as those toward one's parents are difficult to measure, especially over so brief a period as that during which this boy was known. In a later interview Eric showed that he had been reflecting on the points made regarding his father, for he remarked: "There's an old soldier caddying out at the club, he's quite ugly and got bad ideas. The boys make fun of him, but I tell them to let him alone. I think he's got mental trouble like my old man." His tone in speaking of both parents was a more tolerant one.

In the clinic interviews mainly devoted to discussion of attitudes and personal relationships, Eric's physical condition—which of course was closely related to his morale—was not neglected. When reexamination of the boy's heart had convinced the physician that there was no organic defect calling for special care, he took up with Eric the question of systematic exercise to reduce his weight and harden his muscles; gymnasium work at the Y.M.C.A. or elsewhere was advised.

The importance of regular eating and the essentials of a healthful diet were also gone into.

The task of getting Eric back into regular school and well adjusted there proved a difficult one—not, as might have been anticipated, because of the attitudes of those in authority whom he had affronted, but because of the boy's own attitude. The principal who had refused to give him a trans-

fer to another junior high school was won over; but Eric proved unwilling to accept the transfer arranged, his fundamental objection being that he had "been around too long with those little kids." He wanted to get into senior high, where he would be with boys of his own age and where he could take part in real athletic meets and games. How this was to be arranged in view of his deficient preparation was by no means clear, especially since he refused to consider going to summer school. In the fall, however, the transfer was somehow finally made, and Eric's principal presently reported him as gradually improving in work and stability, though his efforts were somewhat spasmodic. The athletic instructor said he was doing very well in football and was keenly interested in it.

Seen at the clinic soon after the receipt of this report, Eric seemed quite at ease and had lost the hang-dog look that formerly characterized him. When the psychologist came into the room during the interview, was reintroduced, and spoke of having met him six months earlier, he smilingly responded, "Yes, I remember you. I didn't like that test when you gave it to me." It was observed that he was wearing two pins—one, that of a literary society to which he had recently been admitted, the other a fraternity pin discarded by his older brother. These insignia were evidently significant of new adolescent interests.

When asked what he had been doing: "I have been doing everything you told me to do," announced the boy—and at once started talking most enthusiastically about his present activities. He pulled up his vest and exhibited his belt to prove that, while he hadn't lost much weight, his girth had diminished. He was playing football a great deal, was substitute tackle on the high school team, and felt he was getting hardened. He liked the fellows and was getting on

quite well with them; only one who was a kind of "sissy"—wore a different sweater from the rest of the bunch and played up to the girls—he didn't care a great deal for him.

Eric had great praise for the director of athletics, Mr. Gould—his wonderful physique, his great ability in football. In talking with him one day, the boy had learned that he was instructing an evening class in mathematics. Eric confessed to having always had trouble with the subject and Mr. Gould suggested that he join this class. He had done so, and was making a special effort to bring up his work. In regard to his studies generally he thought they were going better, that he was now able to apply himself fully in the classroom. He remarked, "I do one thing at a time. When I play football I play hard, and when I am in the classroom I study."

It was evident that the boy had developed quite a bit of hero-worship for his athletic instructor, and that this, as well as his football work, was contributing to his more healthful adjustment to life by furnishing him with a legitimate outlet for his surplus emotions. Above all, these interests could be counted on to drive home the fact that he must play fair.

Since contacts between Eric and the clinic staff ceased with this interview, it is not known how permanent the gains the boy was making proved to be. In cases of such serious, long-continued mental conflict in an adolescent, far more extended and intensive treatment is of course desirable. That a good start had been made with him is all that can be claimed.

The Owen family history might well form part of a study in backgrounds producing social rebels. Certainly the father, as here presented, is a no less understandable and pitiable figure than the son. If the story were carried back another

generation, should we find that the immigrant grandfather of fearful repute had in his day been as much a victim of early influences as his son or grandson?

The point of view regarding heredity and environment here implied is of course the same as that already expressed in Chapter X, and need not be further elaborated. One may, however, note certain obvious ways in which Eric's environment probably developed whatever predisposition to violent temper may have been his: the direct effect of over-excitement and fear upon his nervous system; the effect of a double parental example; the anger and resentment roused by cruelty and injustice; and the influence of his mother's conviction—doubtless dating from his early childhood and frequently expressed in his hearing—that his only trouble was "a temper inherited from his father and her," with all that this avowed belief implies of fatalism and hopelessness.

One notes with interest, also, that all this boy's difficulties centered about his temper. If as a small child he had shown a tendency to lying or stealing, we may be certain that this, too, would have been attributed to inheritance from his father. As a consequence, he would have been in danger of coming to feel that he was doomed to a life of dishonesty.

What of the boy's intense antipathy for his father? Is it completely accounted for by the obvious injustices and brutalities to which he and his mother had been subjected? Or by his grief and resentment at having been deprived of the sort of father he wanted and needed, the sort of father other boys he knew had? Or by shame at the man's record for dishonesty, and his flouting of the mother by divorcing her and marrying again? Perhaps so. Yet another element may well have entered into Eric's feeling. A middle-aged man of our acquaintance who showed many of the faults his

father had shown once remarked to a son of his who exhibited the same faults, "I suppose you hate me for all that you've inherited from me, just as I hated my father for what I had from him." The tendency to hold others responsible for traits which we despise in ourselves or which interfere with our success and happiness is deep-rooted, and when we are brought up to think of all such traits as inherited intact from one forebear or another, the scapegoat is ready-made. It is bad enough that this father or grandfather of ours should have misused us since we took on separate individualities; that he should have doomed us in advance to be like himself is an even deeper and more unforgivable injury. Identification with a parent, which often makes for love and happiness, may thus sometimes be a source of bitterness unexcelled in intensity.

Whatever their causes, rancors such as this boy felt against his father are in effect profoundly destructive; they clutch at the very core of a child's being, rendering him, while in their grip, incapable of responding normally to any of the ordinary experiences of life. It is enough that a teacher, an employer, an older boy or girl, an antagonist in any field, should suggest by word or tone or look the situations in which such rancorous feelings originally arose; the child feels again the clutch of the old blind resentment, the old futile rage, and his response to the new situation is distorted and exaggerated by it.

It was because he knew this to be the case that the psychiatrist endeavored to give Eric a different point of view regarding his father. It is so much easier to see ourselves as victims of circumstances than it is to see our elders as similarly conditioned. Because they were always big and strong enough to browbeat us it is hard to realize that they too were once small and weak and browbeaten, that their

offensive behavior may be the effect of old wounds received in childhood, of mental illness resulting from early sufferings of which we know nothing. Once that realization is born in us, the door of our narrow inner life is unlocked, is opened ever so little, and understanding, pity, fellow-feeling, even tenderness, may creep in, dislodging little by little the rancorous feelings natural to one accustomed to see himself as the chief sufferer in an unjust world.

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

EXCELLENT bibliographies on mental hygiene, child training, and related topics have been published in recent years by several organizations, notably the Child Study Association of America, 221 West 57th Street, New York City, and the National Committee for Mental Hygiene, 450 Seventh Ave., New York City. In view of the ready availability of these bibliographies no effort has been made to compile another rivaling them in completeness. All that is here offered is a brief list of books which in the writer's opinion are likely to prove helpful to parents.

The authors named below are not in accord on every issue of child management and psychological interpretation; they approach the topics to be discussed from different angles, emphasize different aspects of them, represent, in some cases, more or less opposed schools of thought. Such being the case, it is hardly necessary to say that acceptance of them all as final authorities is not suggested. Nevertheless, each has a definite contribution to make to the understanding of children or to the thinking and practice of parents, and there are points enough on which they agree to furnish a substantial basis for training.

The list has been divided into two parts. The first, "For any parent," includes books on the psychological aspects of child training and adult behavior addressed primarily to those who have to do with children and home situations roughly classifiable as normal or average. The second, "For parents interested in special problems," includes books dealing with juvenile delinquency and with certain phases of psychology, mental hygiene, and mental disorder.

This is not a list of sources drawn upon for the present volume, though several of the authors named have been among the larger number who have influenced the writer's thinking along psychological lines. Chief among these are perhaps White, Hart,

Healy, Cameton, Pfister, and Tansley. Of the others listed a number became known to her only after work on the book was far advanced or practically completed.

FOR ANY PARENT

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- CAMERON, HECTOR C., M.D., *The Nervous Child*. 3rd ed. New York, Oxford University Press, 1925. 233 p.
- DE SCHWEINITZ, KARL, *Growing Up: The Story of How We Become Alive, Are Born, and Grow Up*. New York, The Macmillan Co., 1928. 111 p.
- ELLIS, HAVELOCK, *Little Essays of Love and Virtue*. New York, George H. Doran Company, 1922. 187 p.
- FENTON, JESSIE C., *A Practical Psychology of Babyhood: The Mental Development and Mental Hygiene of the First Two Years of Life*. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1925. 348 p.
- GROVES, ERNEST R., *The Drifting Home*. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1926. 217 p.
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- ✓MILLER, H. CRICHTON, M.D., *The New Psychology and the Parent*. New York, T. Seltzer, 1923. 241 p.
- OVERSTREET, H. A., *About Ourselves: Psychology for Normal People*. New York, W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1927. 300 p.
- PATRI, ANGELO, *Child Training*. New York, D. Appleton and Co., 1922. 434 p.
- , *School and Home*. New York, D. Appleton and Co., 1925. 220 p.
- PRATT, GEORGE K., M.D., *Your Mind and You: Mental Health*. New York, Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1924. 70 p. (National Health Series, ed. by National Health Council.)
- RICHARDSON, FRANK HOWARD, M.D., *Parenthood and the Newer Psychology: Being the Application of Old Principles in a New Guise to the Problems of Parents with Their Children*. New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1926. 200 p.
- RIGGS, AUSTEN FOX, M.D., *Just Nerves*. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1922. 87 p.
- THOM, DOUGLAS A., M.D., *Everyday Problems of the Everyday Child*. New York, D. Appleton and Co., 1927. 349 p.

- WHITE, WILLIAM A., M.D., *The Mental Hygiene of Childhood*. Boston, Little, Brown and Co., 1919. 193 p.
- WICKES, FRANCES G., *The Inner World of Childhood: A Study in Analytical Psychology*. New York, D. Appleton and Co., 1927. 380 p.

FOR PARENTS INTERESTED IN SPECIAL PROBLEMS

- BURNHAM, WILLIAM H., *The Normal Mind: An Introduction to Mental Hygiene and the Hygiene of School Instruction*. New York, D. Appleton and Co., 1924. 702 p.
- BURT, CYRIL, *The Young Delinquent*. New York, D. Appleton and Co., 1925. 619 p.
- HART, BERNARD, M.D., *Psychopathology: Its Development and Its Place in Medicine*. New York, The Macmillan Co., 1927. 156 p.
- , *The Psychology of Insanity*. New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1912. 176 p.
- HEALY, WILLIAM, M.D., *Honesty: A Study of the Causes and Treatment of Dishonesty Among Children*. Indianapolis, The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1915. 220 p.
- , *The Individual Delinquent. A Textbook of Diagnosis and Prognosis for All Concerned in Understanding Offenders*. Boston, Little, Brown and Co., 1915. 830 p.
- , *Mental Conflicts and Misconduct*. Boston, Little, Brown and Co., 1917. 330 p.
- MYERSON, ABRAHAM, M.D., *The Psychology of Mental Disorders*. New York, The Macmillan Co., 1927. 135 p.
- PFISTER, OSKAR, *Love in Children and Its Aberrations*. New York, Dodd, Mead and Co., 1924. 576 p.
- TANSLEY, A. G., *The New Psychology and Its Relation to Life*. New York, Dodd, Mead and Co., 1921. 283 p.
- VAN WATERS, MIRIAM, *Parents on Probation*. New York, New Republic, Inc., 1927. 328 p.
- , *Youth in Conflict*. New York, Republic Publishing Co., 1925. 293 p.
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